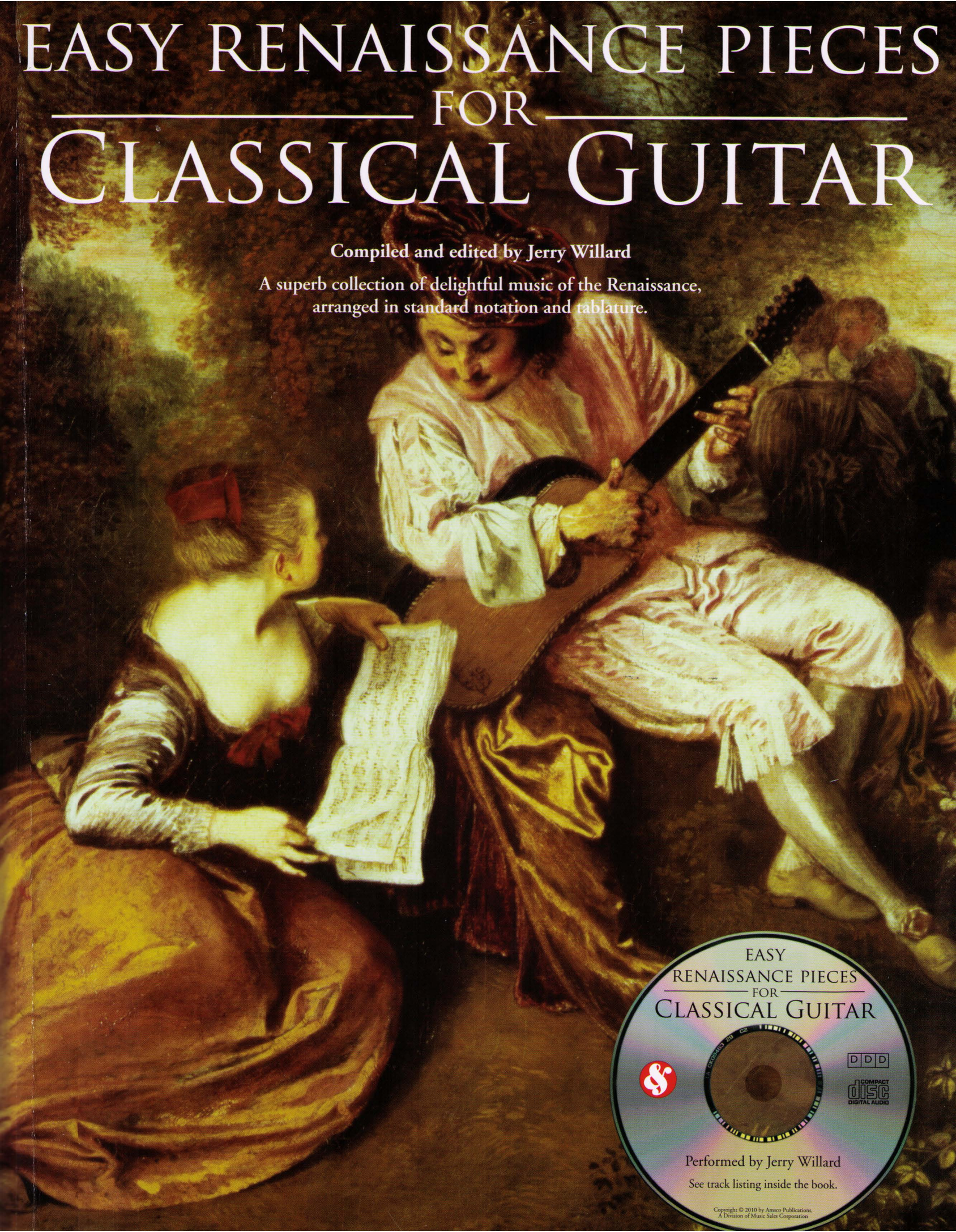
# EASY RENAISSANCE PIECES FOR CLASSICAL GUITAR

**Compiled and edited by Jerry Willard**

A superb collection of delightful music of the Renaissance, arranged in standard notation and tablature.



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# EASY RENAISSANCE PIECES FOR CLASSICAL GUITAR

**Compiled and edited by Jerry Willard**

**A superb collection of delightful music of the Renaissance, arranged in standard notation and tablature.**

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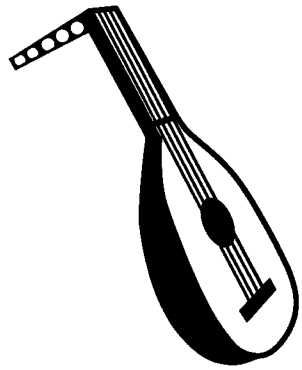
# Introduction

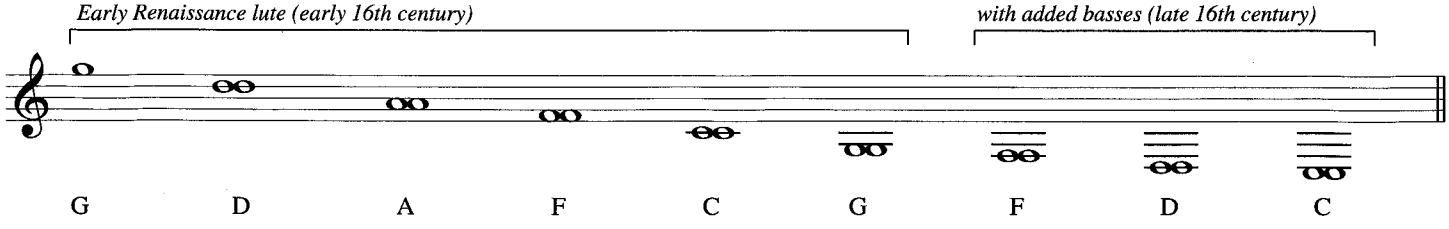
The *Renaissance* (which means "rebirth" or "revival") began around 1400 and ended in the early 1600s. The musicians and artists of the Renaissance looked back to classical models, spawning a new era of artistic growth. With the invention of the printing press, music became available to the public as never before.

There was a great flowering of sacred and instrumental music, including music for the lute. The lute was brought to Europe in the thirteenth century by the returning crusaders. It was originally played with a plectrum, usually a feather tip. Later, the plectrum was discarded in favor of plucking with the right-hand fingers, thereby creating more polyphonic capabilities. Of all the instruments of the Renaissance, the lute was without a doubt the most popular. The amount of music printed and hand-written for the lute is astounding.

## The Renaissance Lute



The Renaissance lute had a single first string followed by five pairs of strings. Each single string or pairing of strings was called a *course*. An early Renaissance lute would have had six courses, but as the Renaissance moved forward, more strings were added. By the time it reaches the late-Renaissance composer Robert Johnson, the typical lute has nine courses.

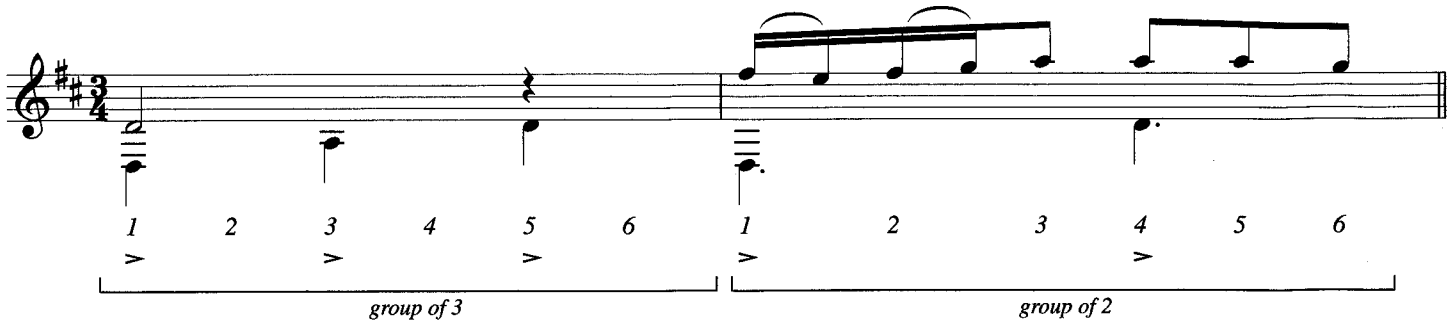



## The Guitar

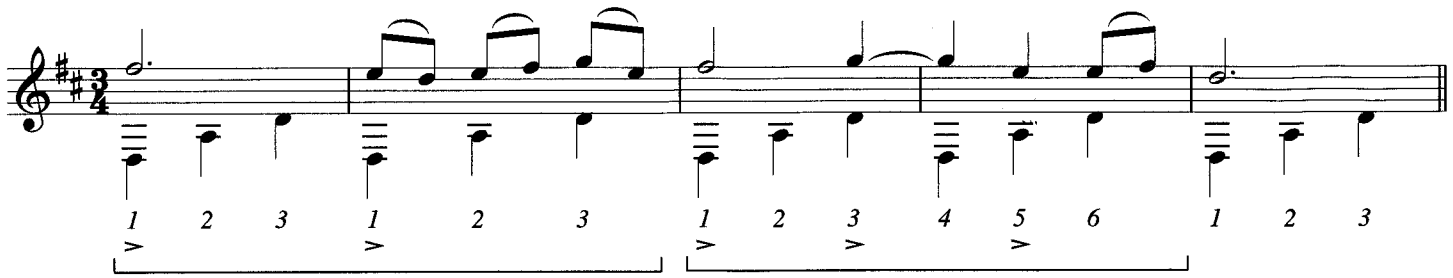
There is great similarity between present-day guitar tuning and the Renaissance lute, which makes the music in this book particularly adaptable to the guitar. The modern guitar, however, is tuned lower than the lute, so when this music is transcribed for the guitar, it is automatically lowered a minor third. It is very important to keep the string relationships the same to achieve the proper sound and playing conditions for each piece. The problem with this is that the bright (lute) key of G major becomes a lower, darker (guitar) key of E major. This is why, in this book, I recommend in most cases and have recorded the music with the use of a capo on the second fret. (In my opinion, the guitar sounds and reacts better with a capo at the second fret rather than the third fret.) In this way, the music maintains its lightness and charm and is also easier to play. It is indicated at the beginning of each piece whether it is recorded with a capo or not.

## Rhythm

Much of the music in the Renaissance was based on dance forms and dance rhythms. Often the barlines and beaming are not indicative of what is actually happening in the music. This was especially prevalent in music that was in triple meter. A commonly used device in triple meter is called *hemiola*, meaning roughly the ratio 3:2. One of the most common uses of hemiola in this book is in the "Galliard" (Track 19), measures 8 and 9. Notice that the eighth note remains the same throughout; what changes is the accent:

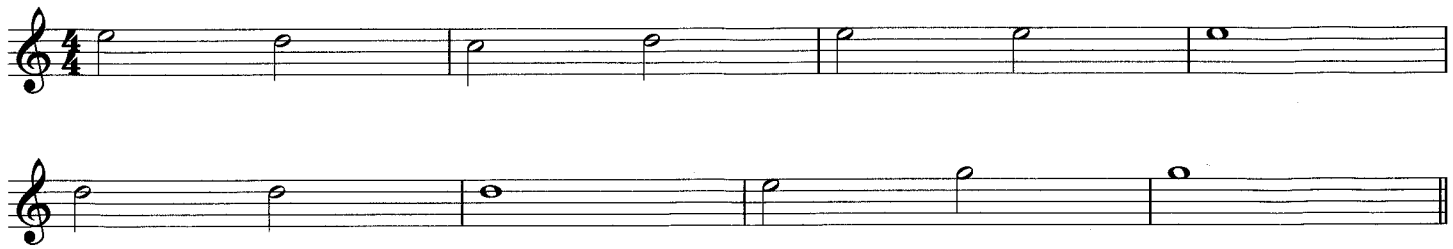



Another usage of hemiola is in the "Saltarello" (Track 42), measures 8 through 11. Here the duple (2) grouping is in the first two measures followed by the triple (3) grouping in the following two measures:




This rhythm was very important in Renaissance and Baroque dance and was used extensively in the music of these periods. Remember, it's only the accents that change. The quarter note or eighth note (depending on the piece) remains the same. Please listen to the enclosed CD for further clarification.

In the Renaissance, the primary rhythmic note value was either the half note or whole note. In the present day, it's the quarter note. For example, it would have been common in the Renaissance to write "Mary Had A Little Lamb" like this:



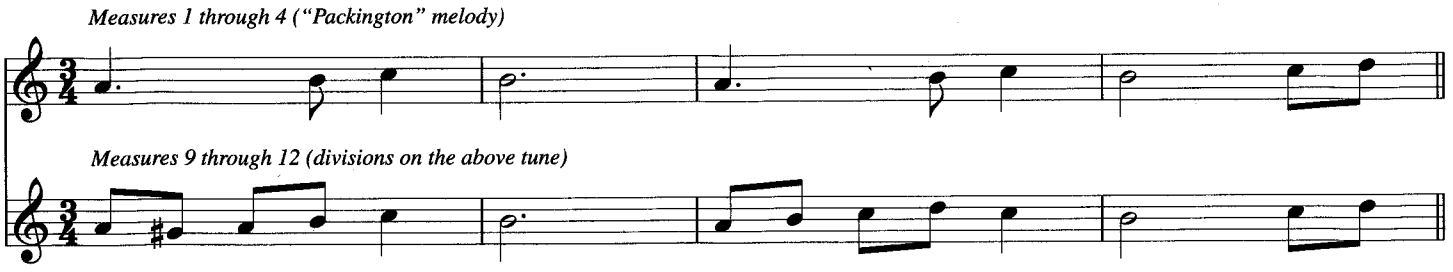
Today, of course, it is written like this:

So just because the note values are larger, it doesn't necessarily mean that the tempo of the piece is slow. The enclosed CD and metronome markings will help to make this clear.

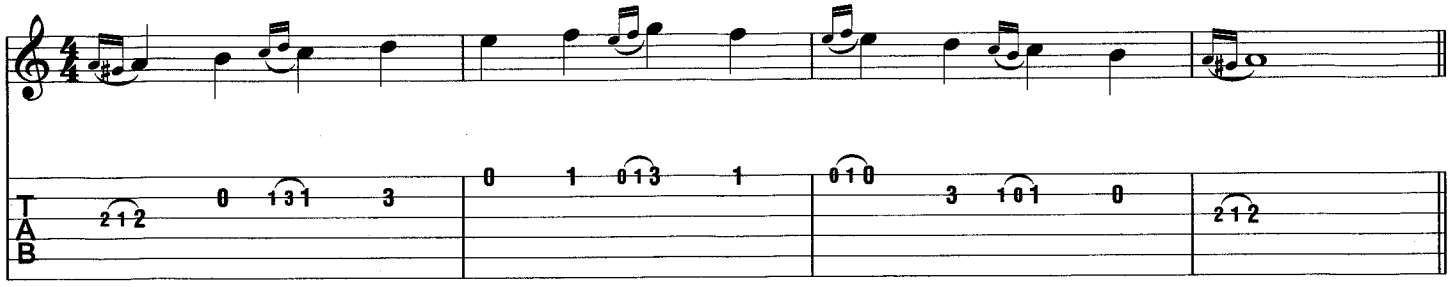
## Ornamentation

Much of the music of the Renaissance was improvised. A good performer would rarely play exactly what was written and would embellish it with various *divisions* and *graces*.

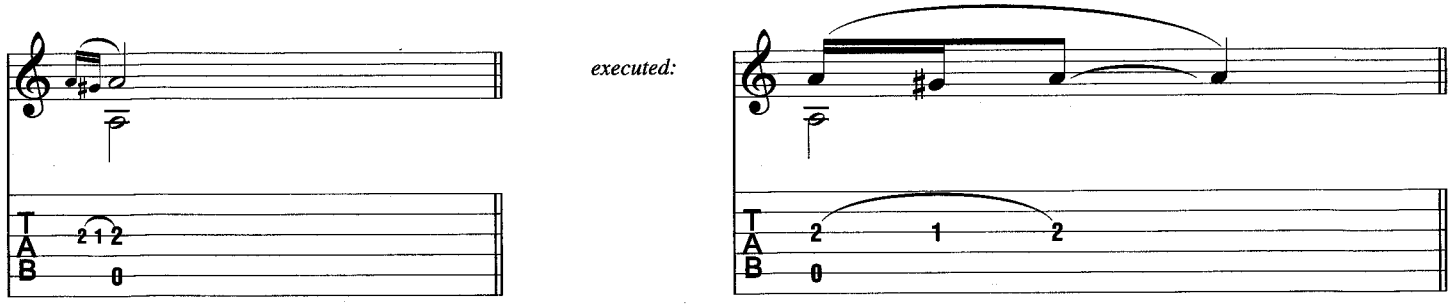
*Divisions* are embellishments that add extra notes and complex rhythms to a simple passage. Let's take a look at "Packington's Pound" (Track 36). The top staff is the melody as written in the first eight measures. The bottom staff shows how the author composed the divisions:




Another form of ornamentation is adding hammer-ons and pull-offs known as *graces*. Here is an example of this:



If there is a bass note, the first note of the grace is always played with the bass:




I have recorded "Peg-A-Ramsey" (Track 40) and "Tanz" (Track 46) first as it is written and then as a performer in the sixteenth century might have added ornaments. These are good examples of using both divisions and graces. For simplification, all of the pieces in this book can be played plain without any extra graces, even leaving out the graces that are written. For the more advanced and adventurous player, feel free to add extra graces and divisions.

## Recording

In the process of recording these pieces, I decided to play the tempos that I felt the pieces should be played at, rather than too slowly for demonstration purposes. I also decided to use a capo to achieve the correct timbre and gesture that many of the compositions in this book require. There are many solutions to this depending on one's skill level, the quality of guitar, and musical aesthetic. The metronome markings are suggestions only and not meant to be a goal. A variety of tempos will work for many of the compositions in this book, so pick a comfortable tempo for your level of playing.

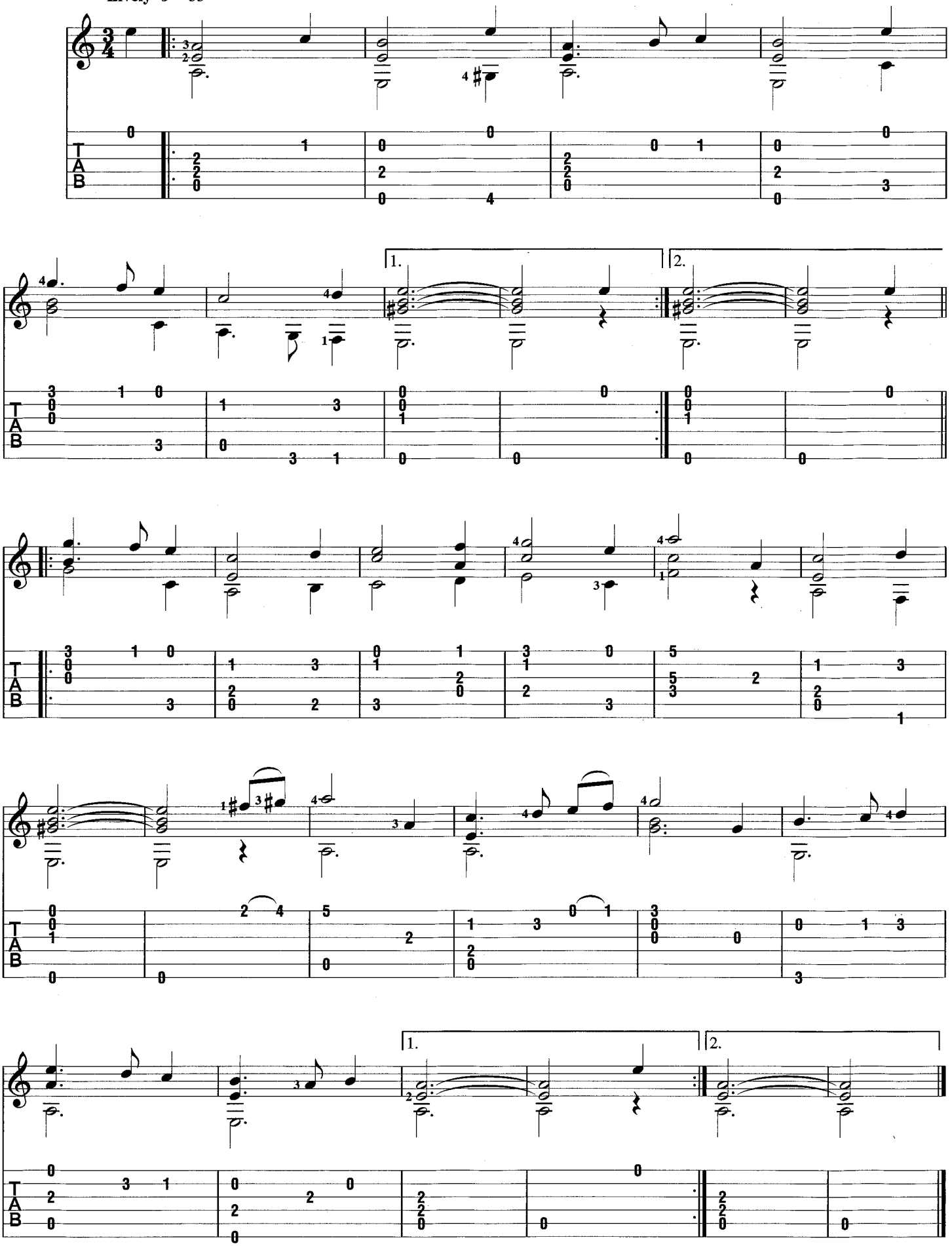
**Jerry Willard**
**Stowe, Vermont, August 2010**

# A Jig

R. Askue (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Lively** ♩. = 55

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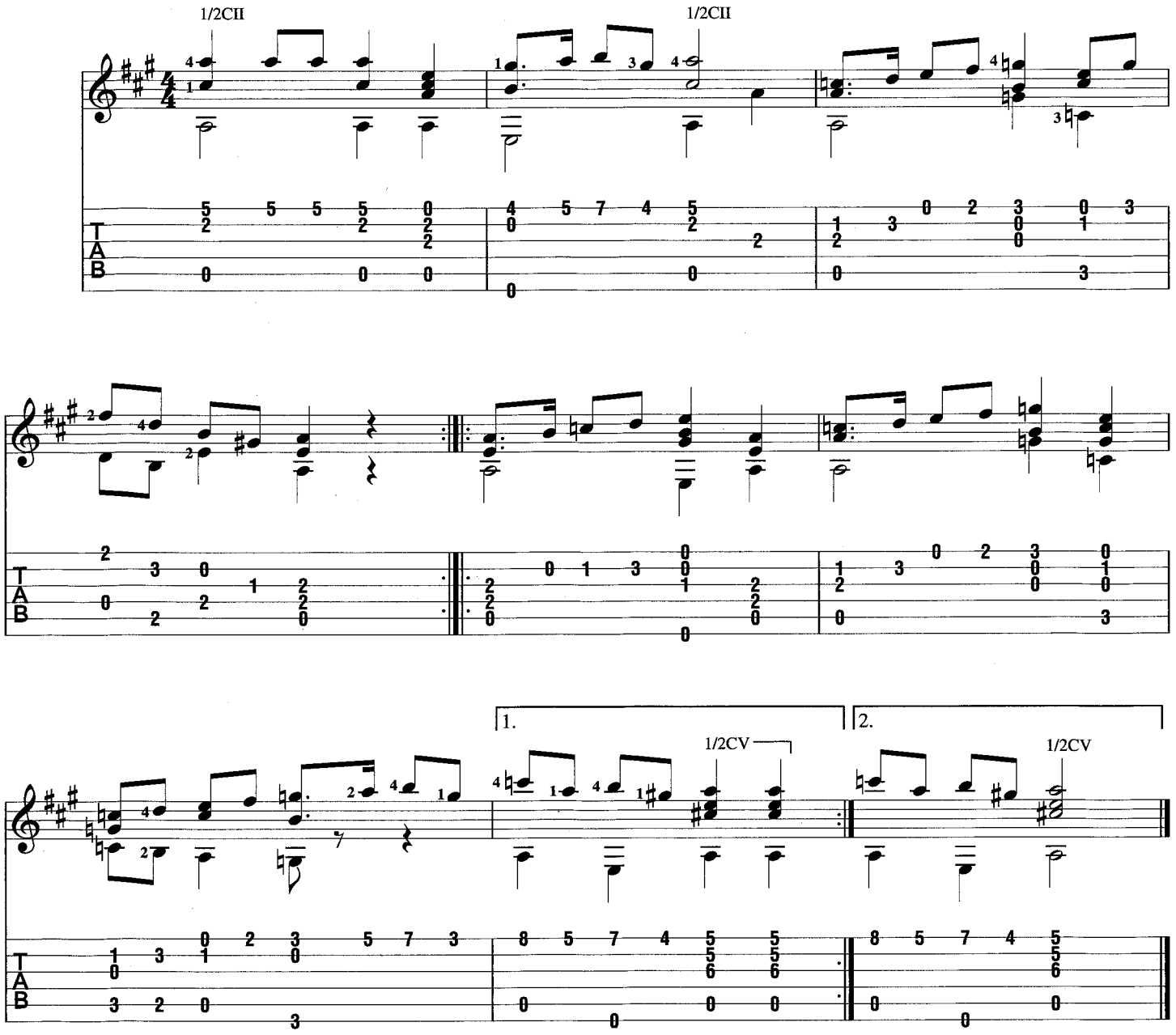
# A Jig

Francis Cutting (c.1550–1595)

*Capo II*

**Lively** ♩ = 97

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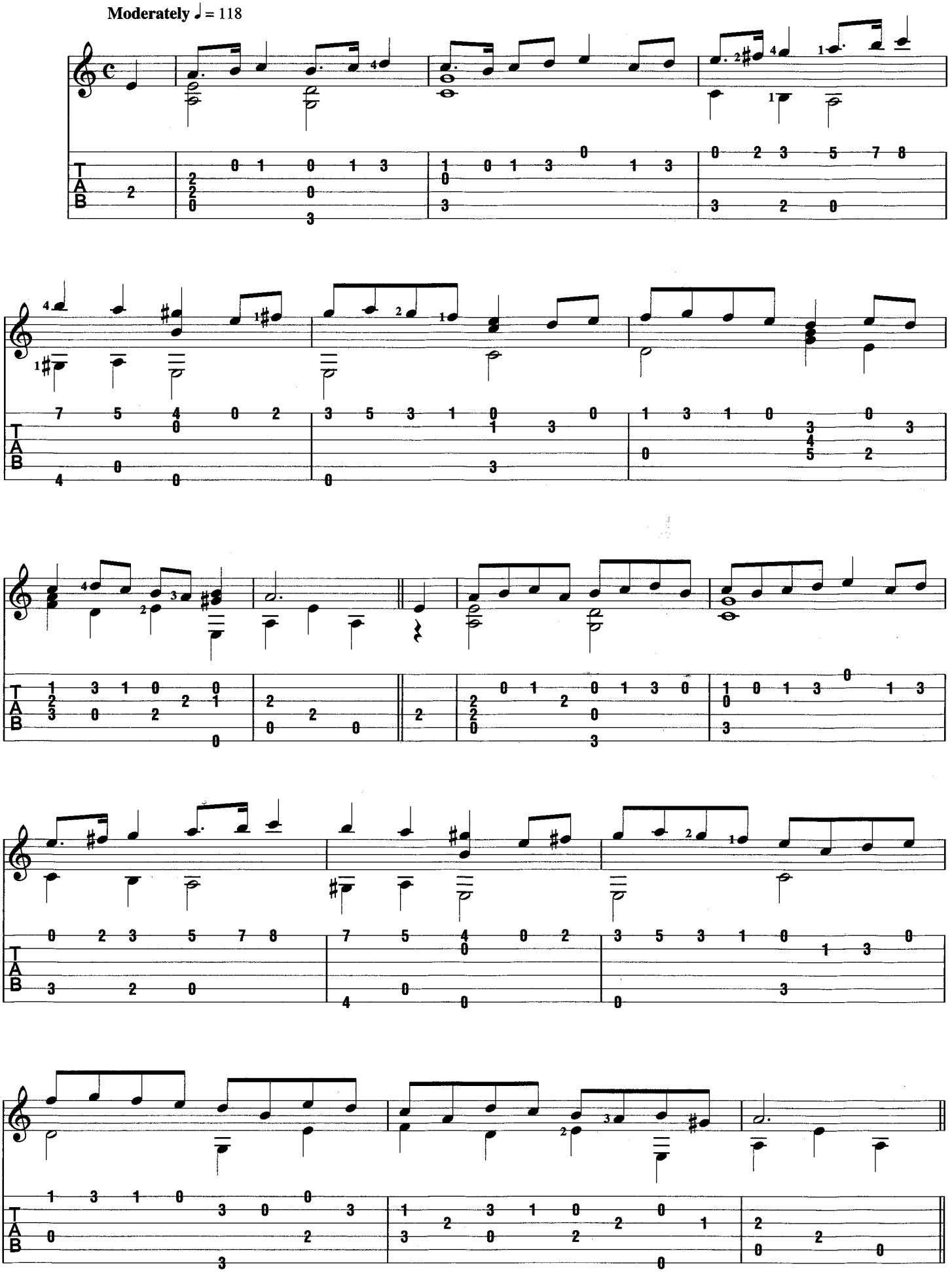
# Almain

Robert Johnson (1583–1633)

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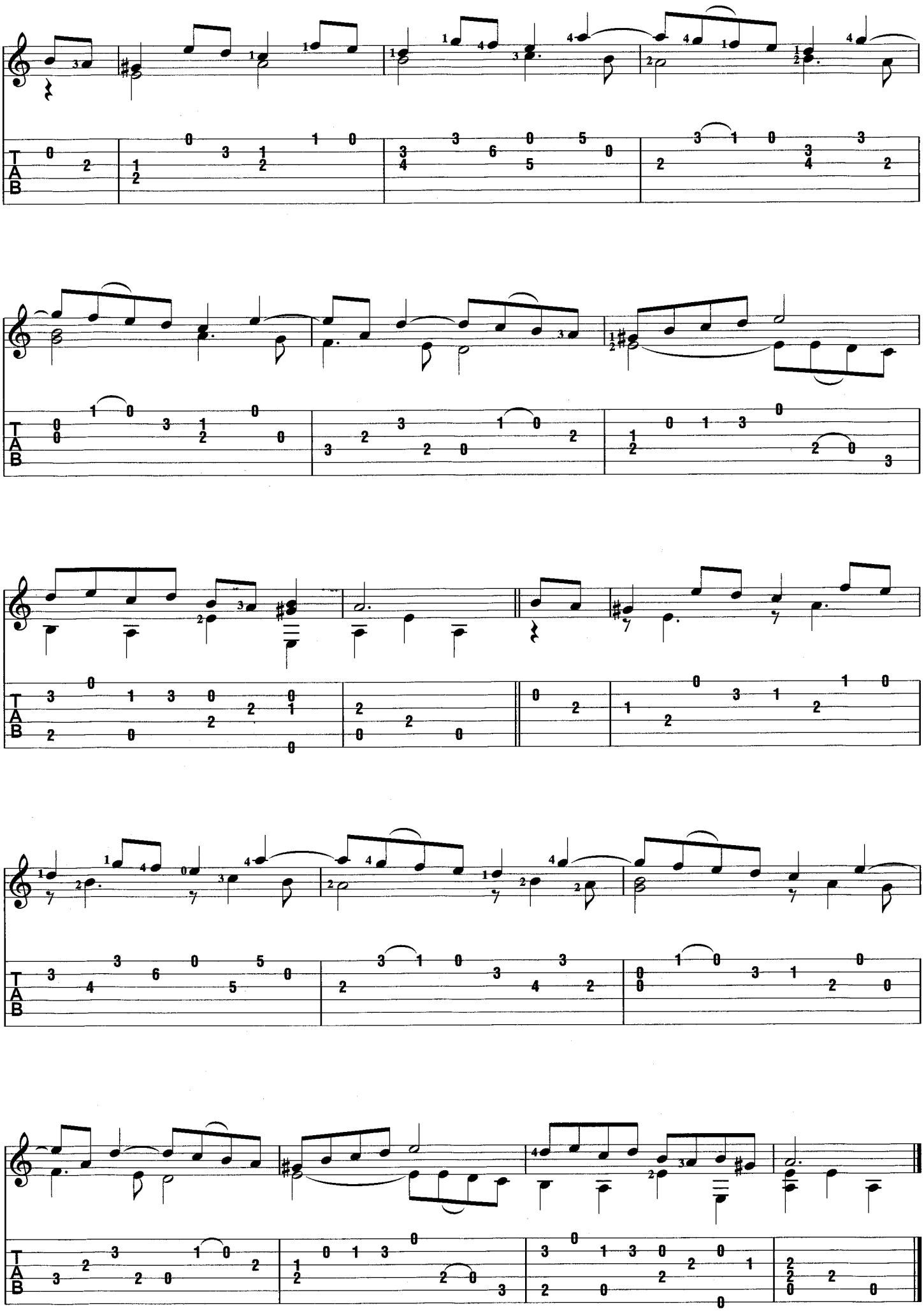
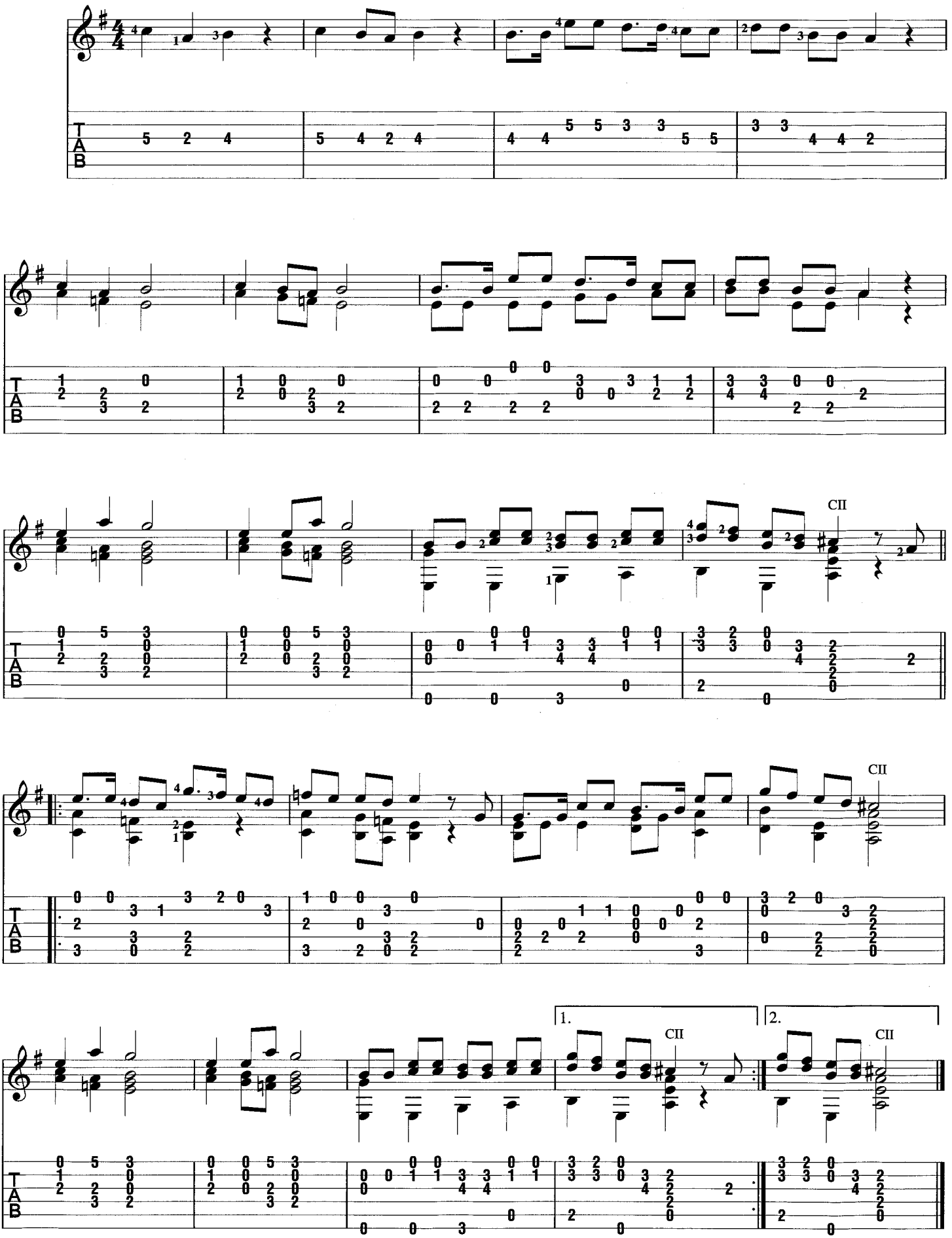


# Ah Robyn, Gentle Robyn

William Cornyshe (1465–1523)

*Capo II*

**Slowly**

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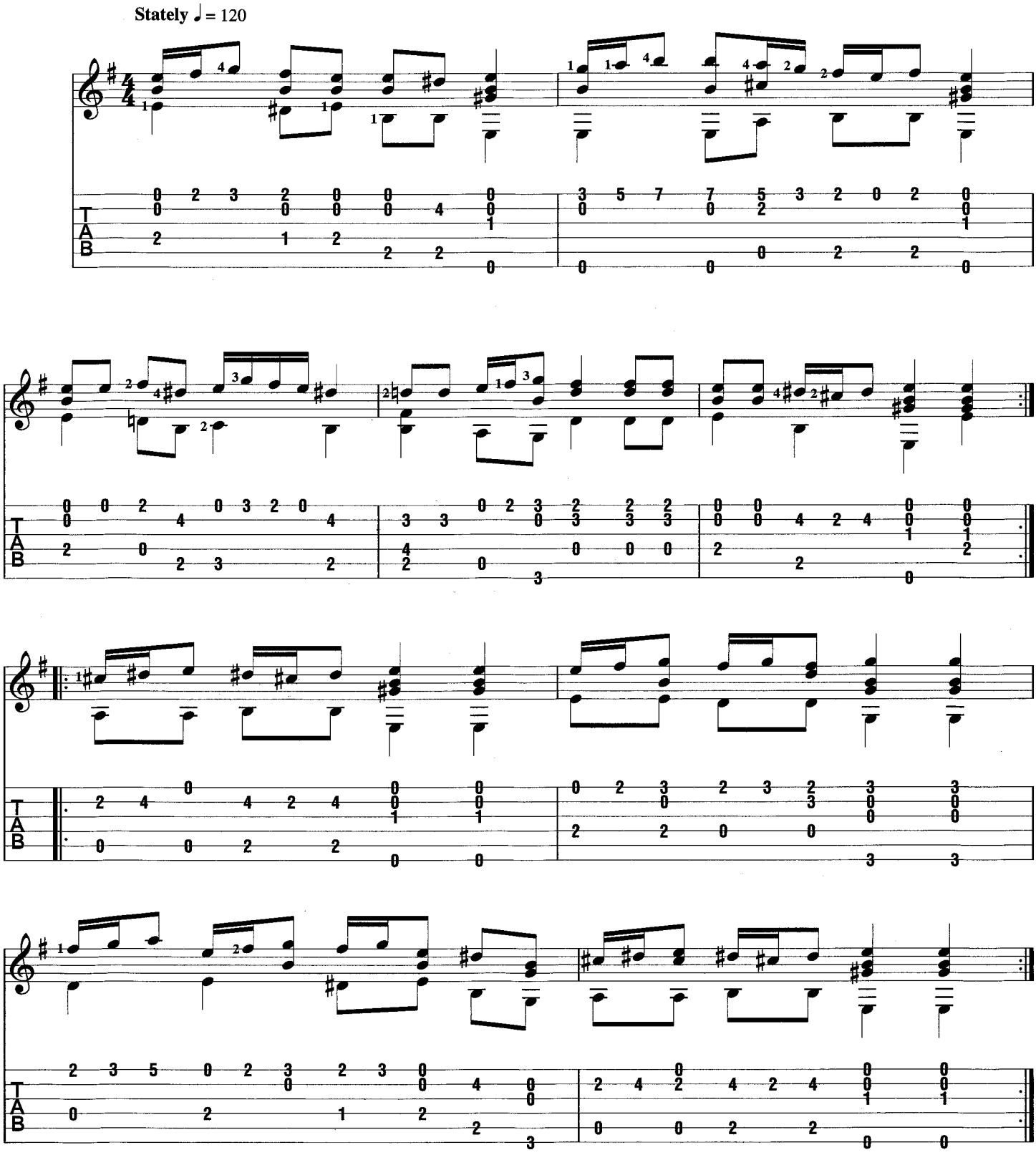
# Almain

Richard Allison (c.1560–c.1610)

*Capo II*

**Stately** ♩ = 120



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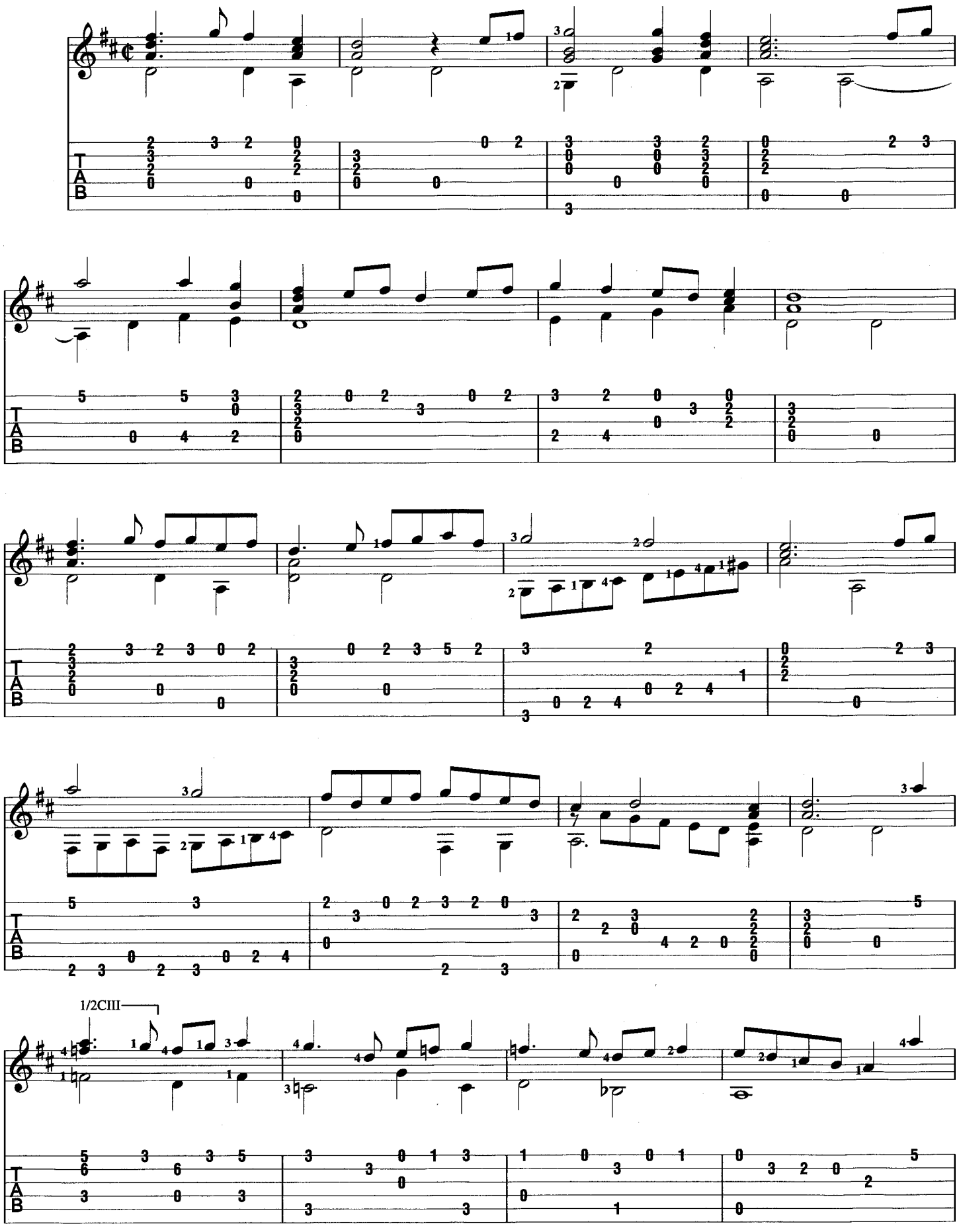
# Balletto

Jean Baptiste Besard (1567–1617)

*Capo II*

**Stately** ♩ = 53

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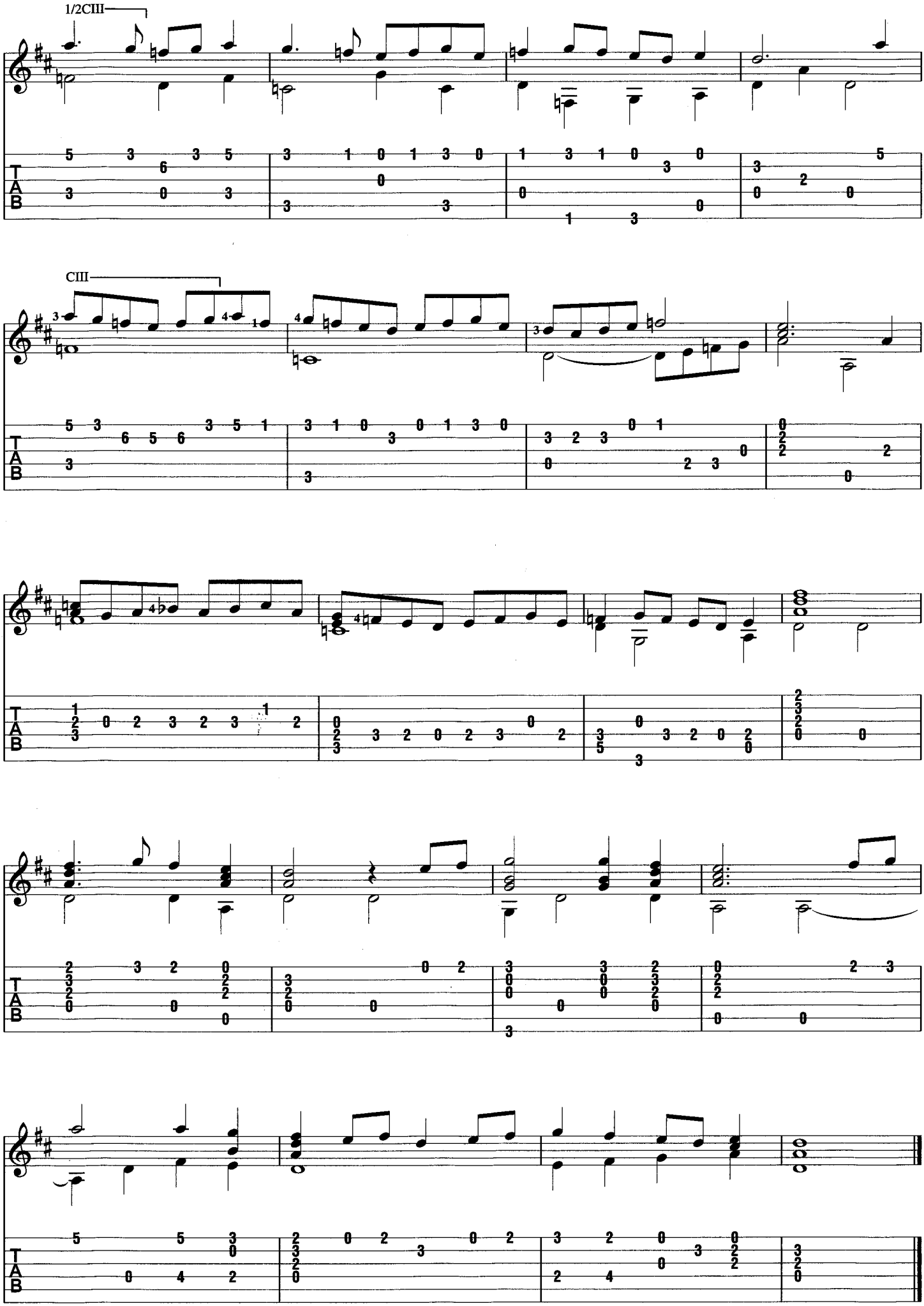
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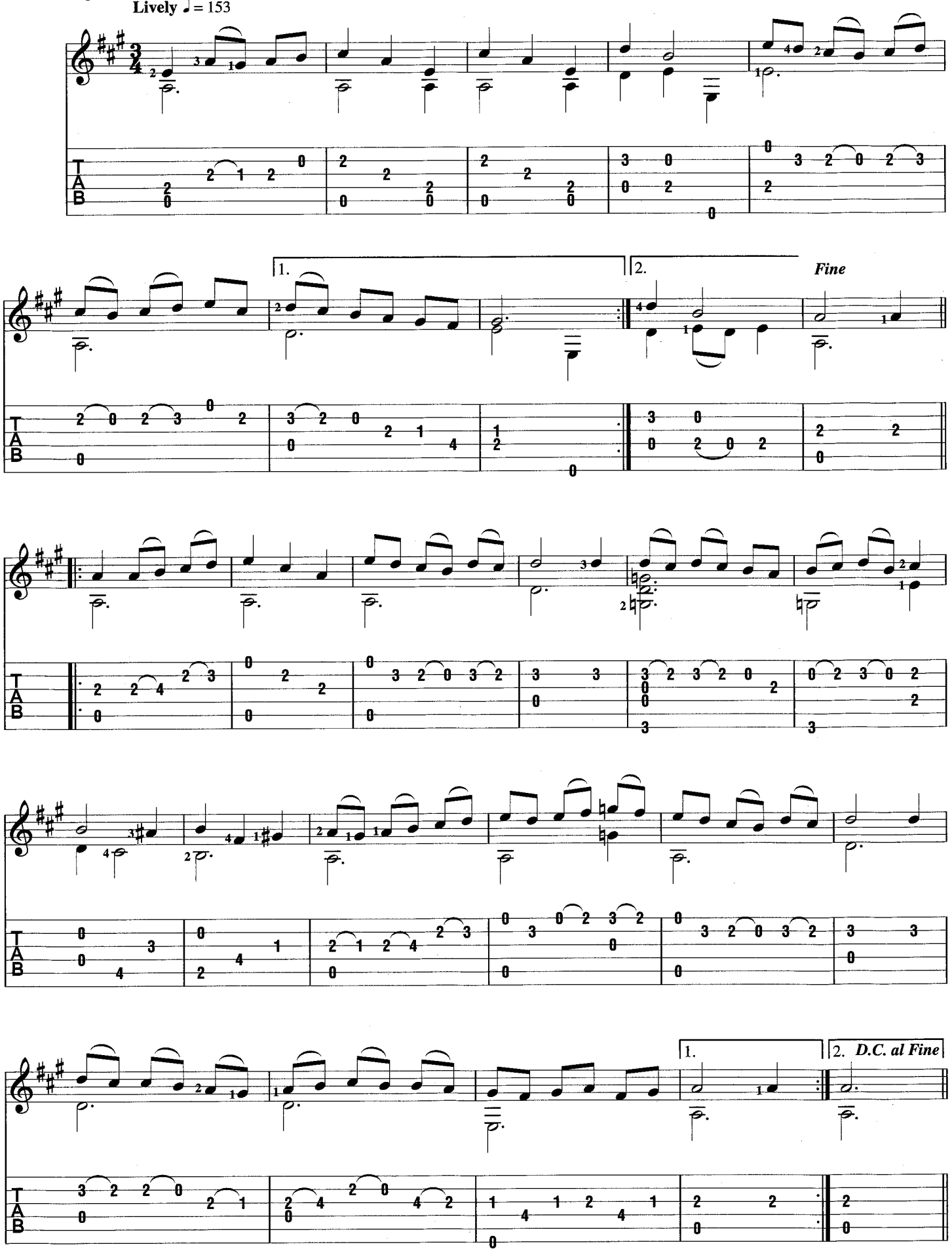
CIII

# Basse Danse la Roque

Pierre Attaingnant (c.1495–c.1551)

*Capo II*

**Lively** ♩ = 153

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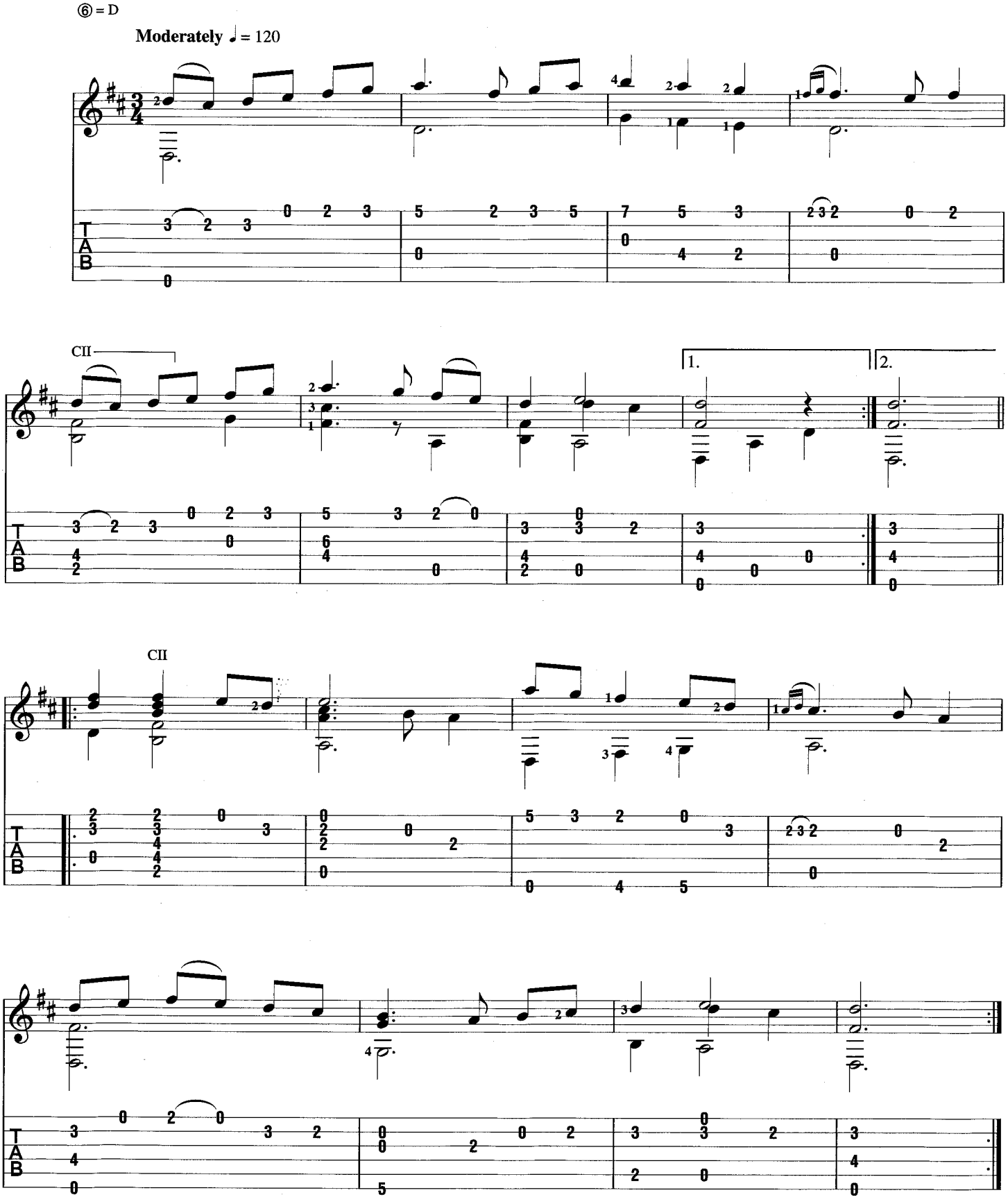
# Bianco Fiore

Cesare Negri (1536–1605)

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# Black Nag

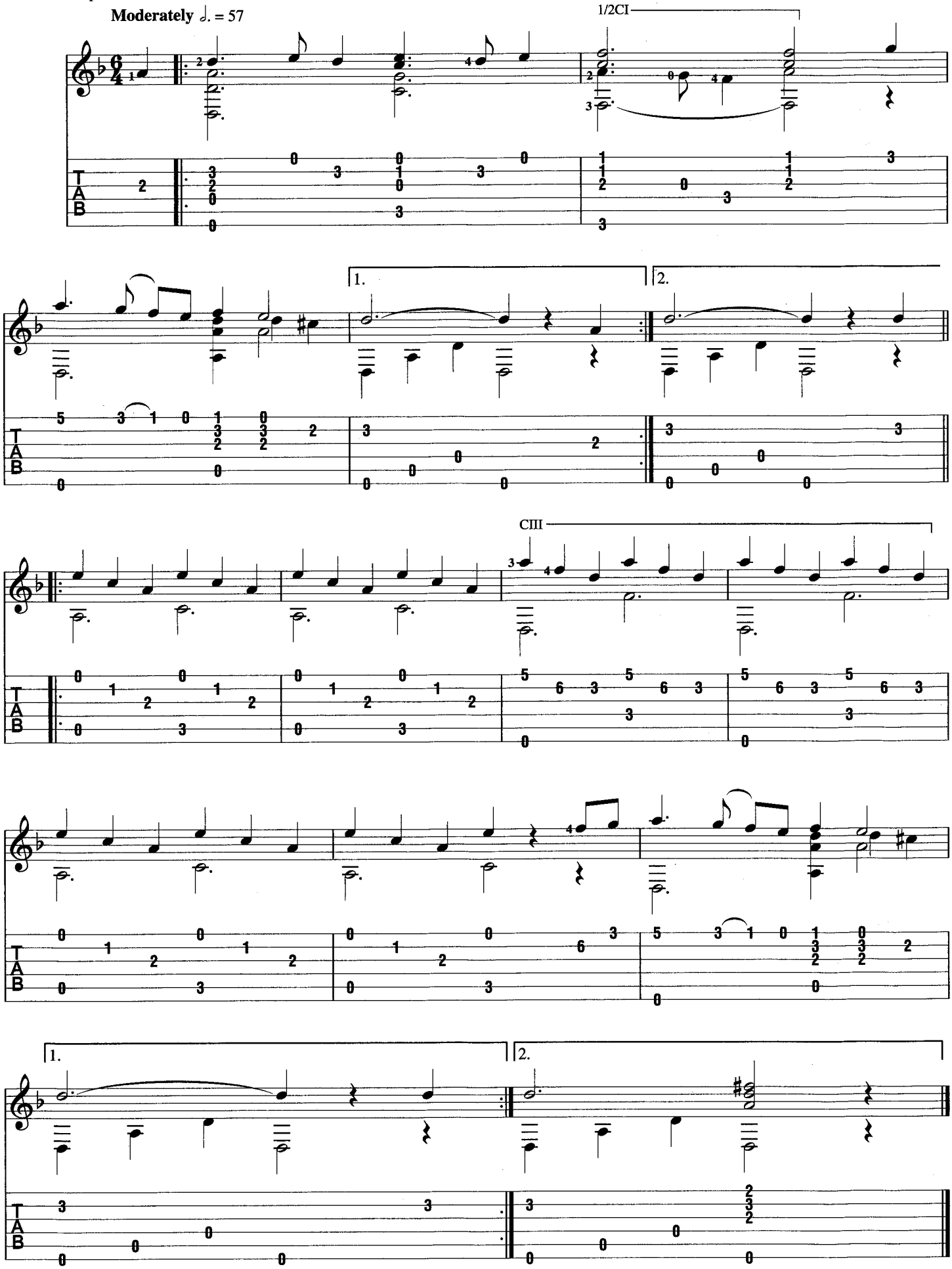
(from *The Dancing Master*, 1657)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

⑥ = D

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩. = 57



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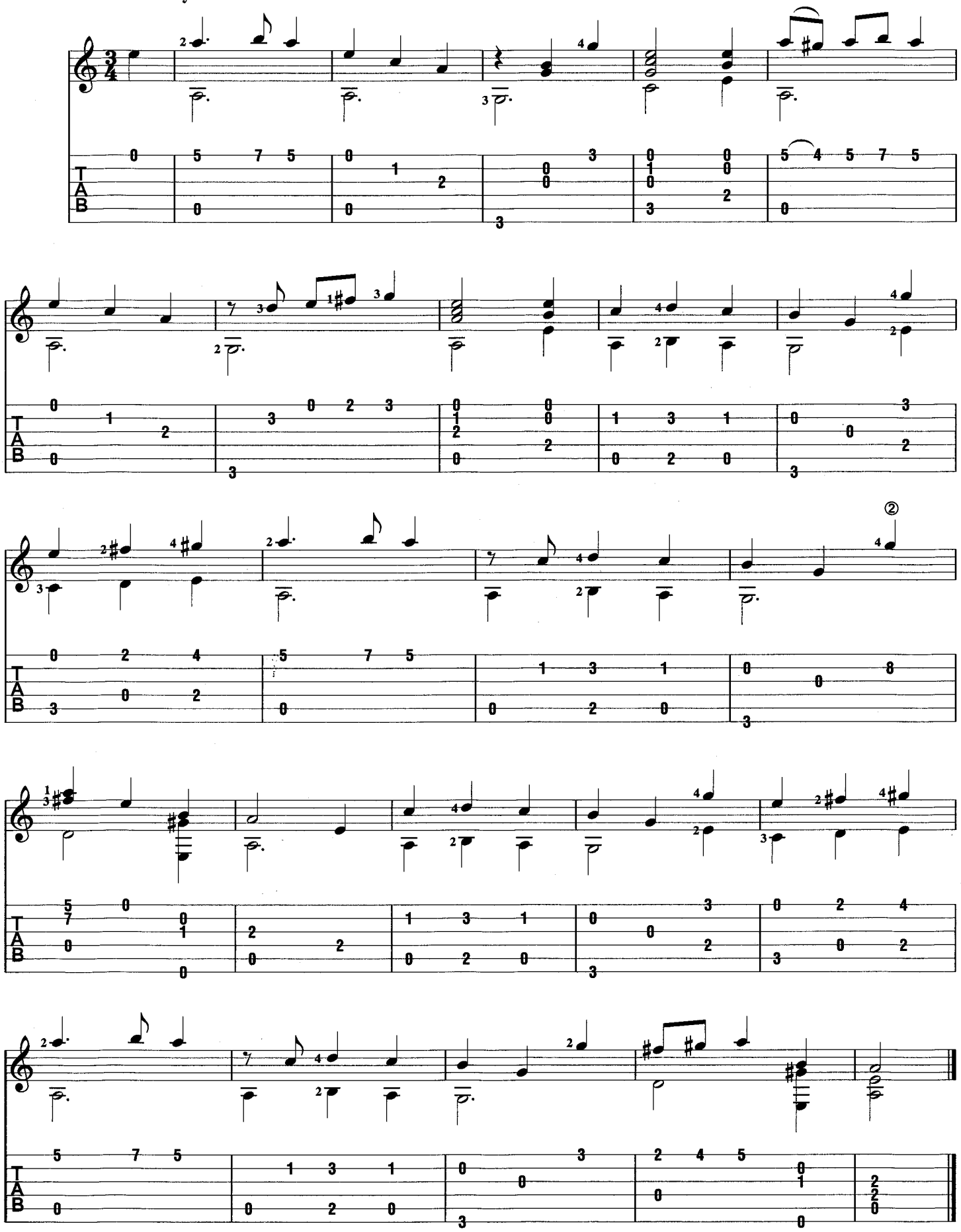
# Bonny Sweet Boy

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 137



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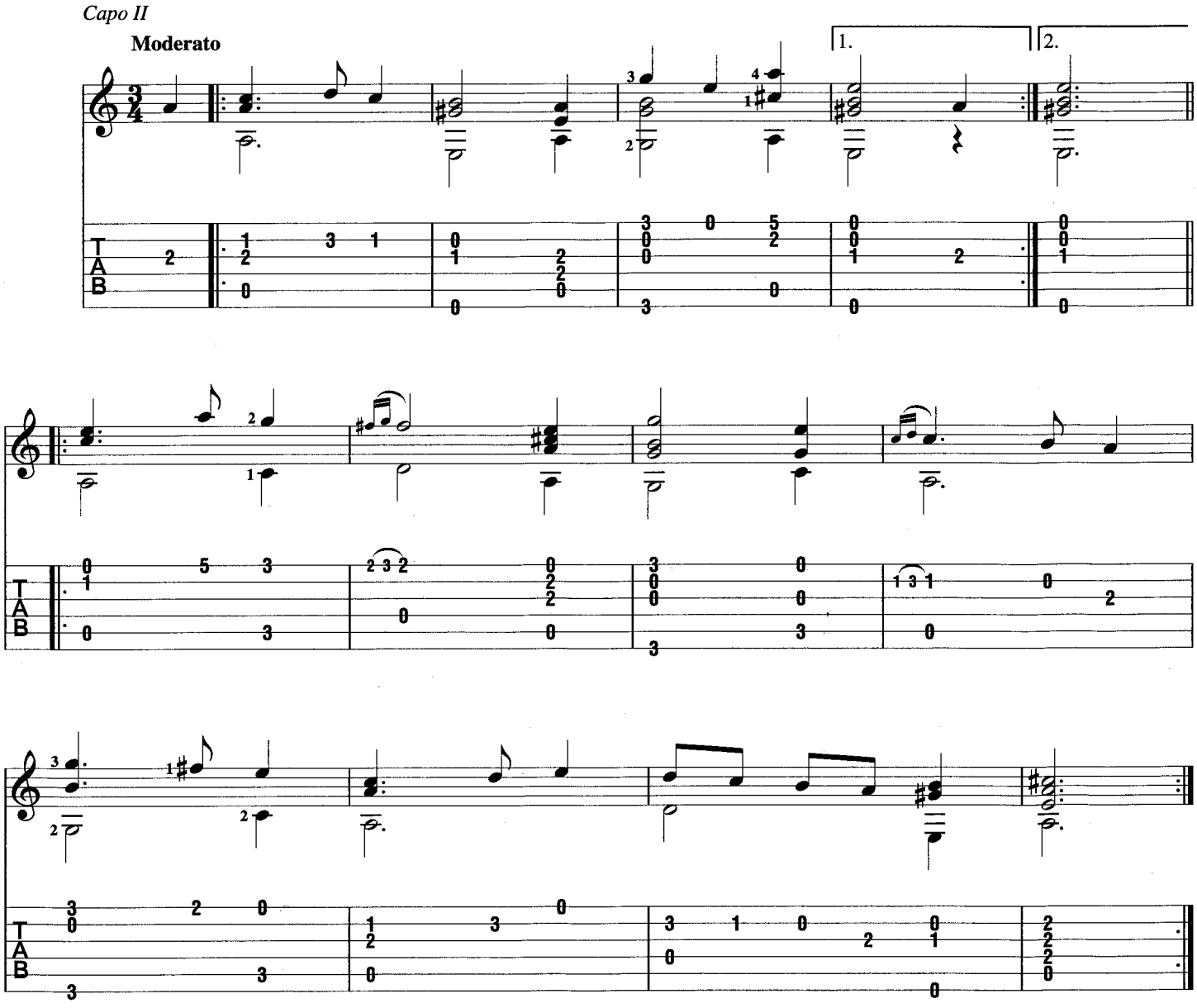
# Bonny Sweet Robin

Anon. (English, 16th century)

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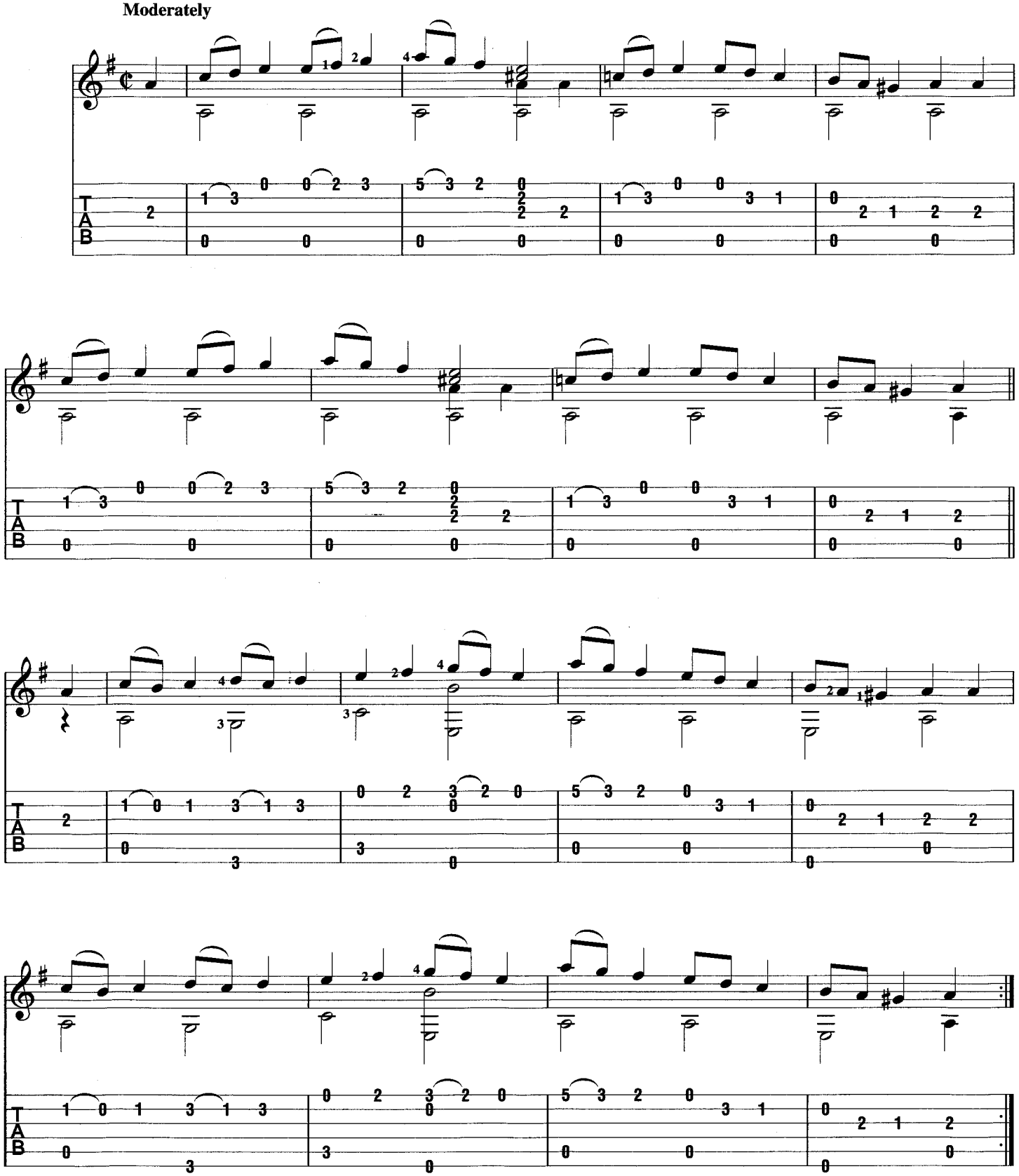
# Branle

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately**



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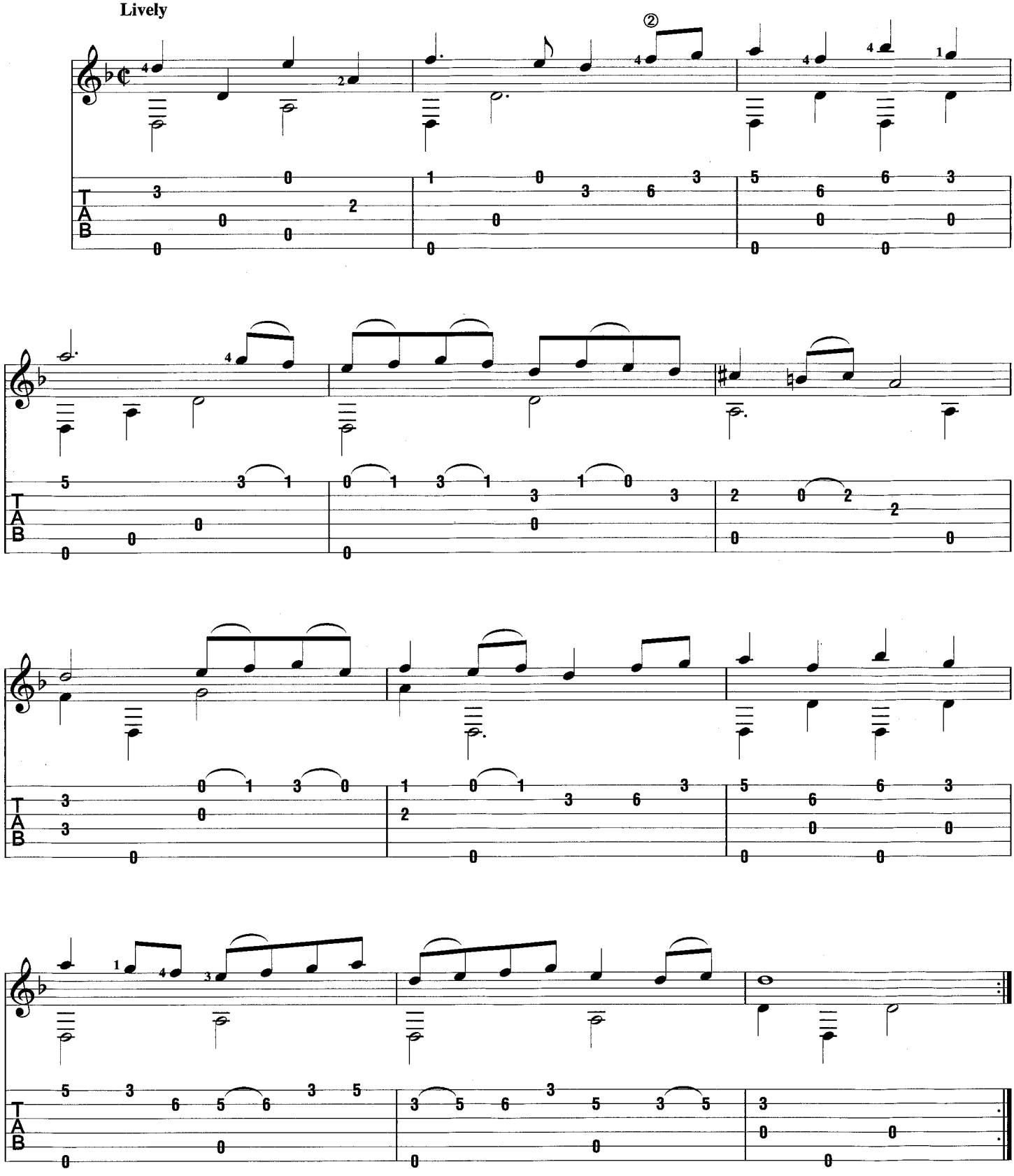
# Branle de la Cornemuse

Robert Ballard (c.1575–1649)

⑥ = D

*Capo II*

**Lively**



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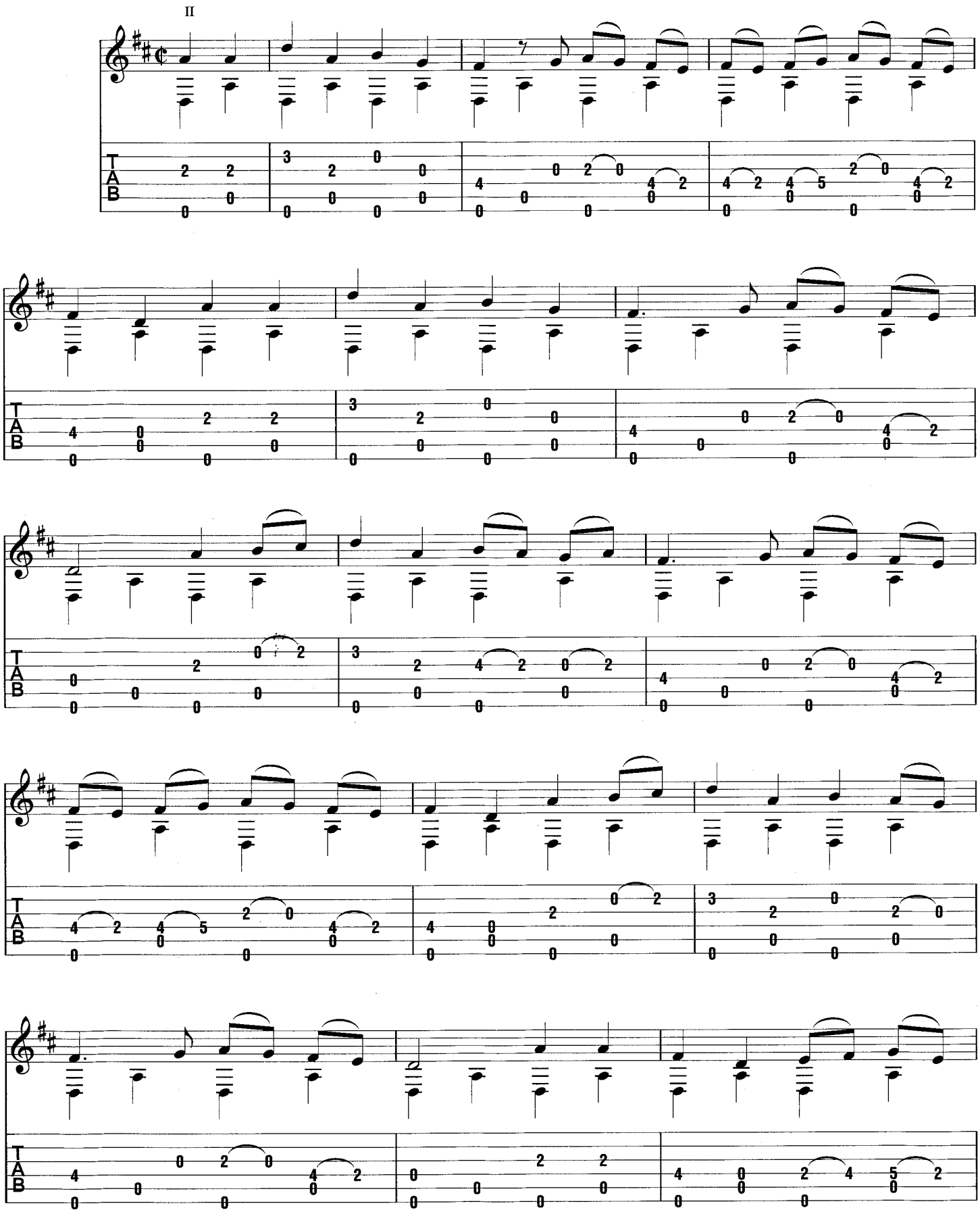
# Branle de Village

Robert Ballard

⑥ = D

**Moderately** ♩ = 88

II



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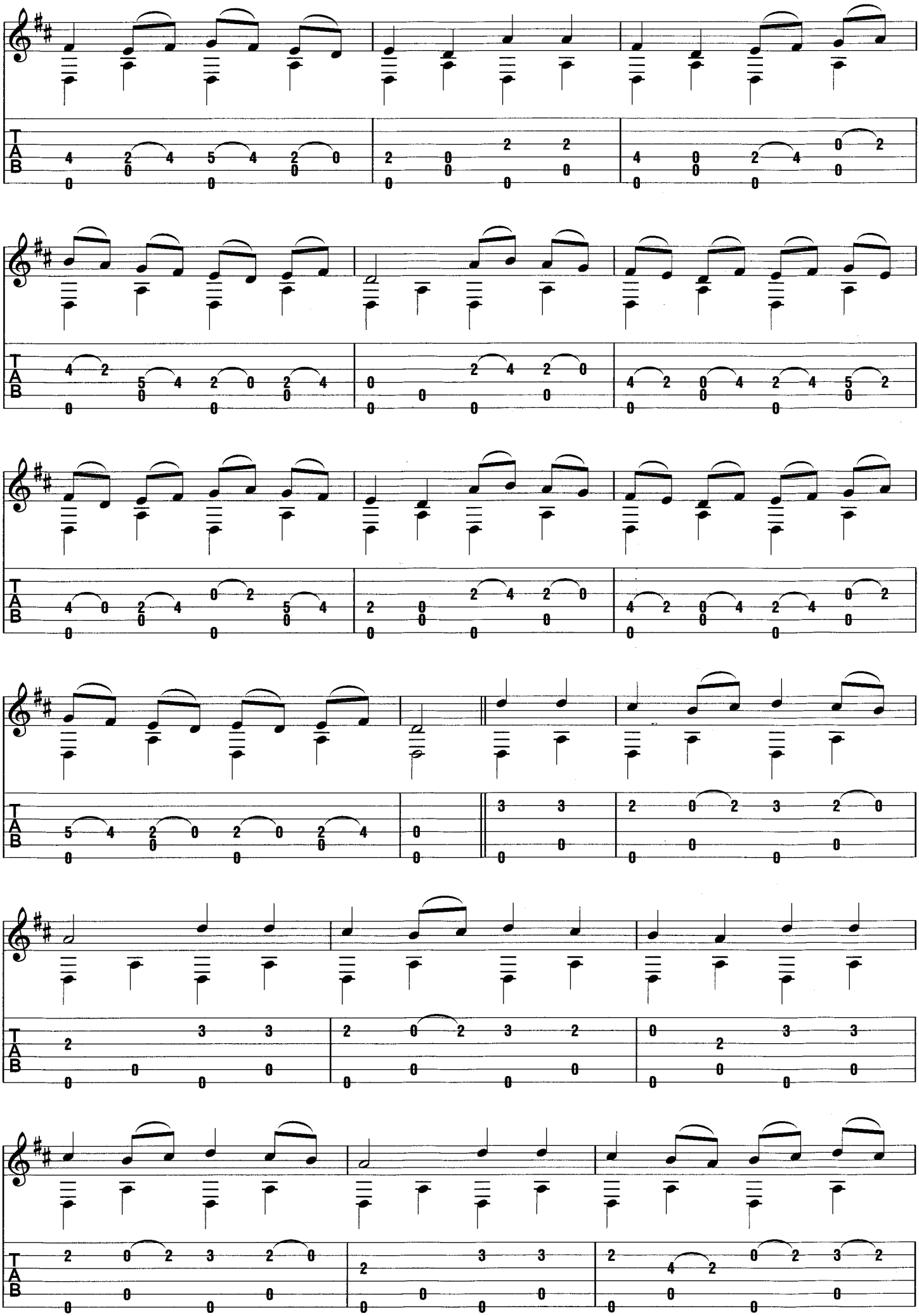
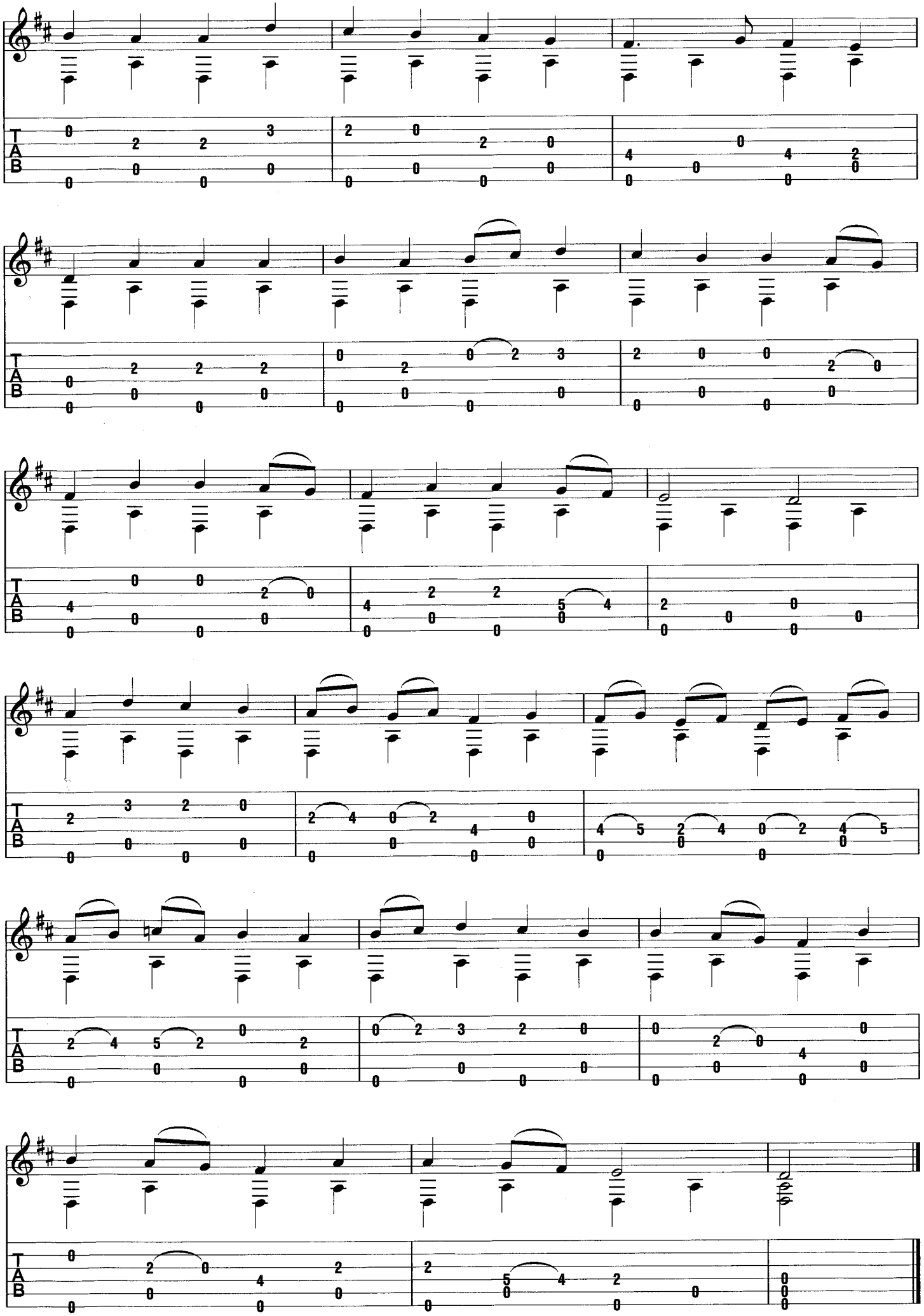


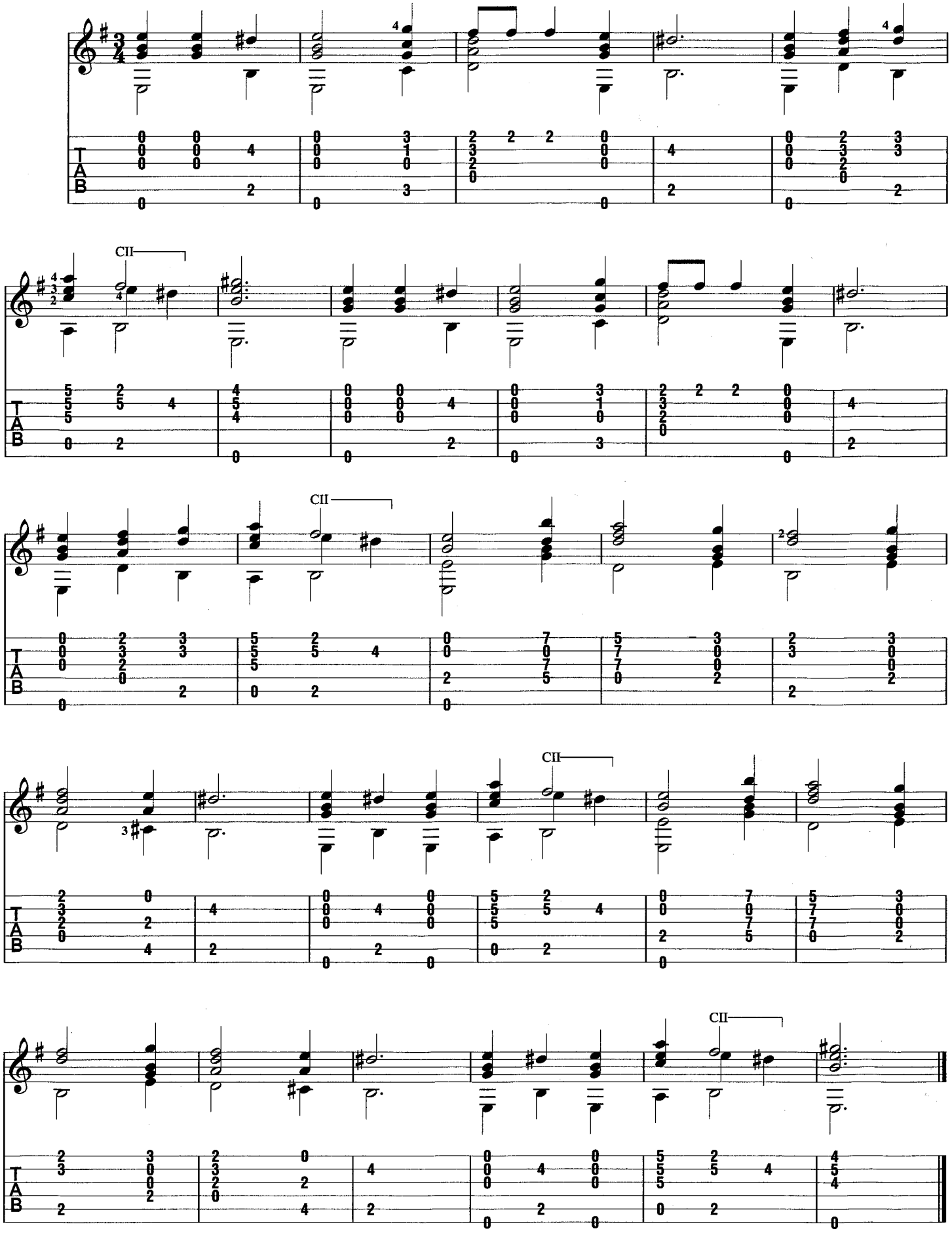


# Coventry Carol

Anon. (English, 15th century)

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 84

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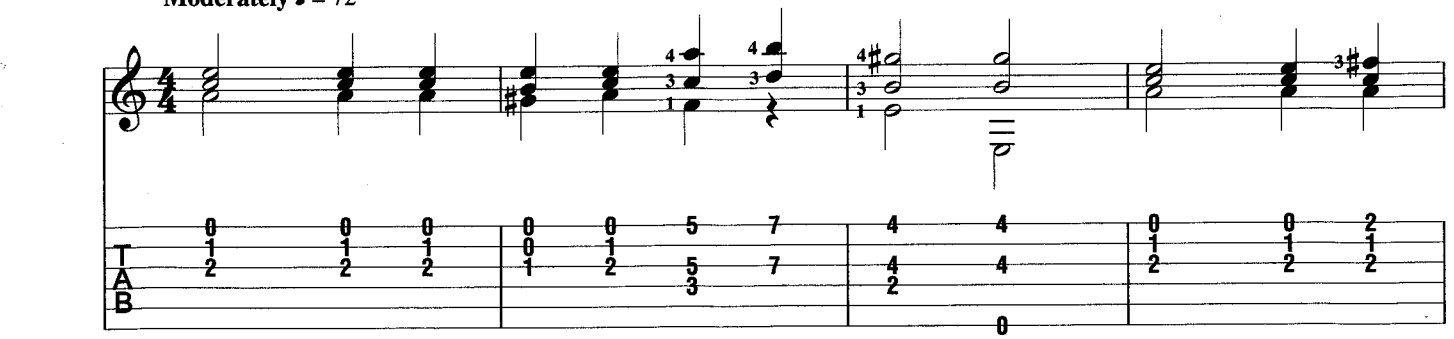
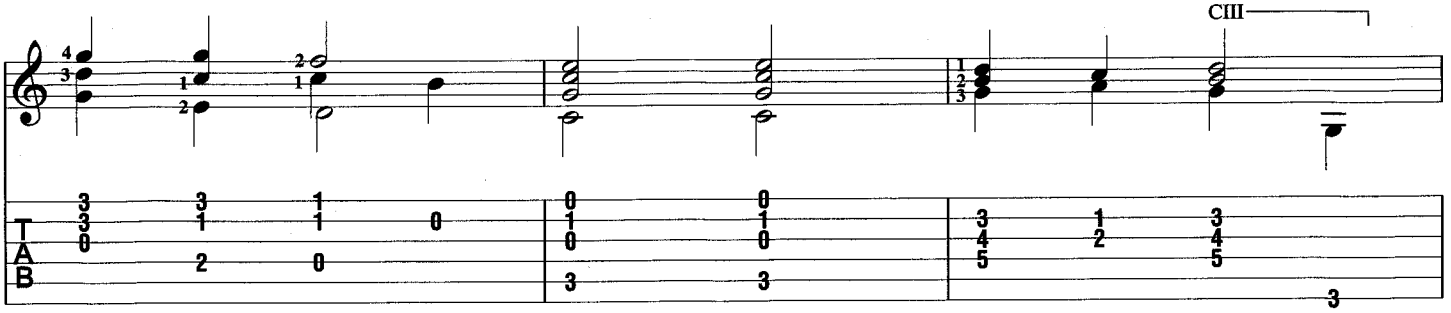
# Dove son quei fieri occhi?

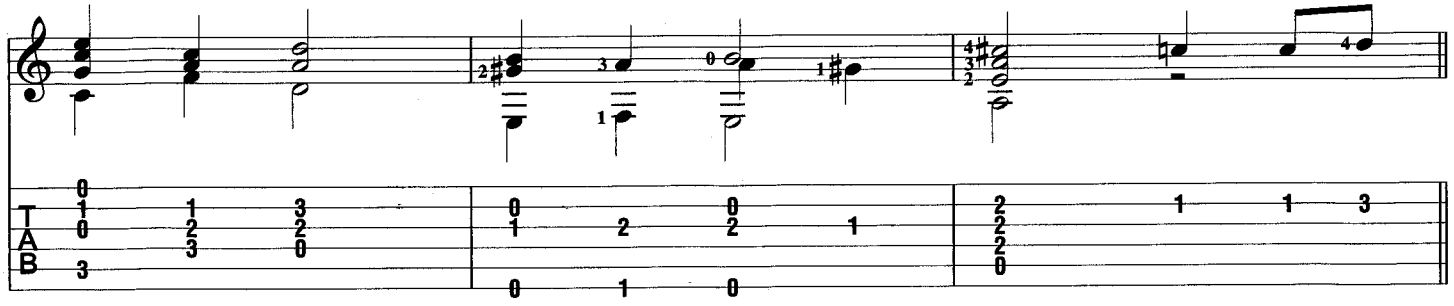
Anon. (Italian, 16th century)

*Capo II*

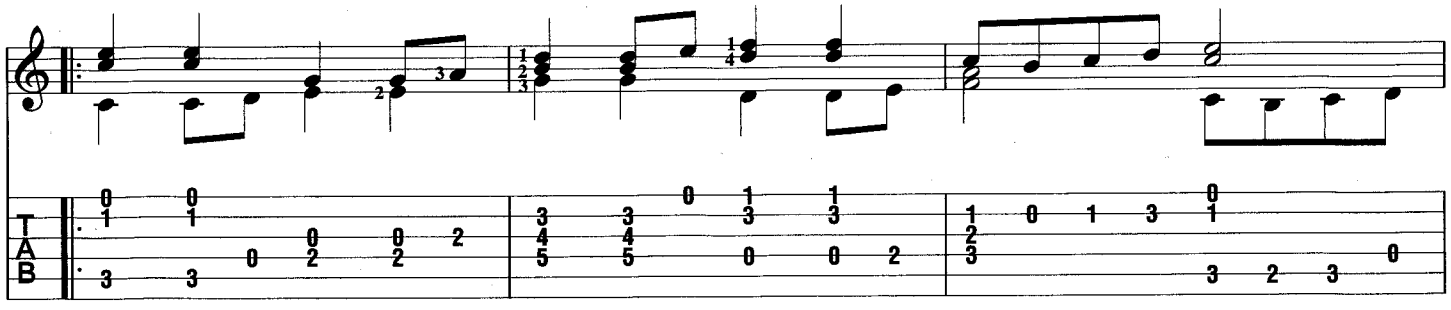
**Moderately** ♩ = 72

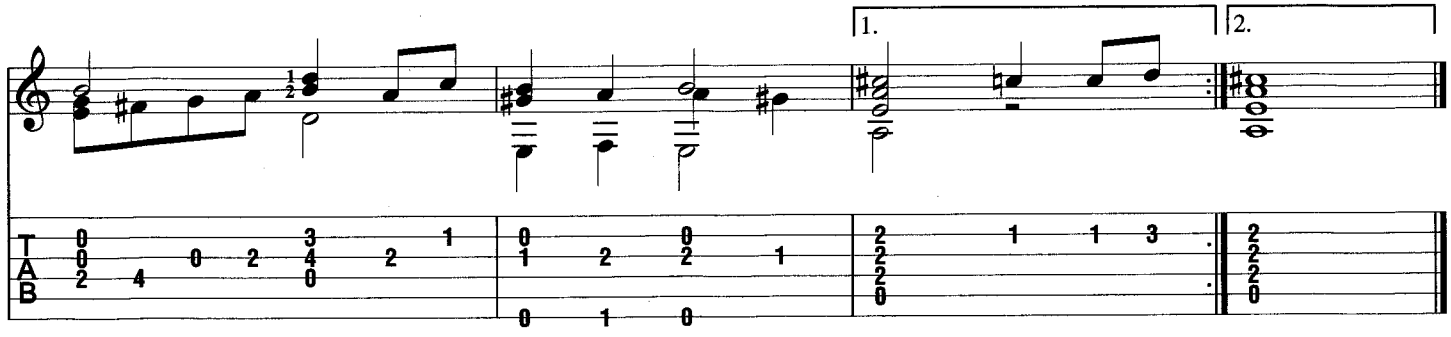




**a little faster** ♩ = 84



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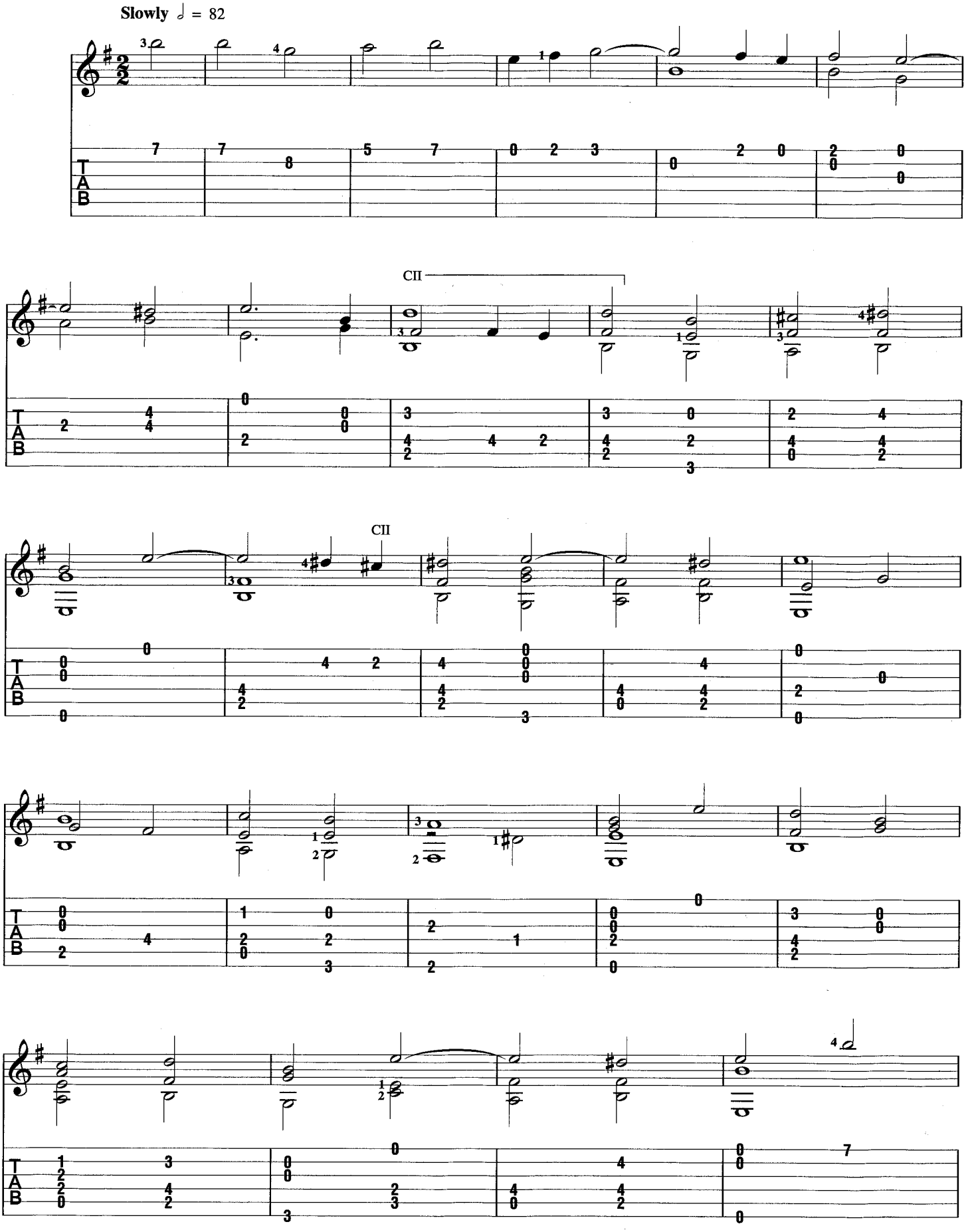
# Fantasia

Anon. (Italian, 16th century)

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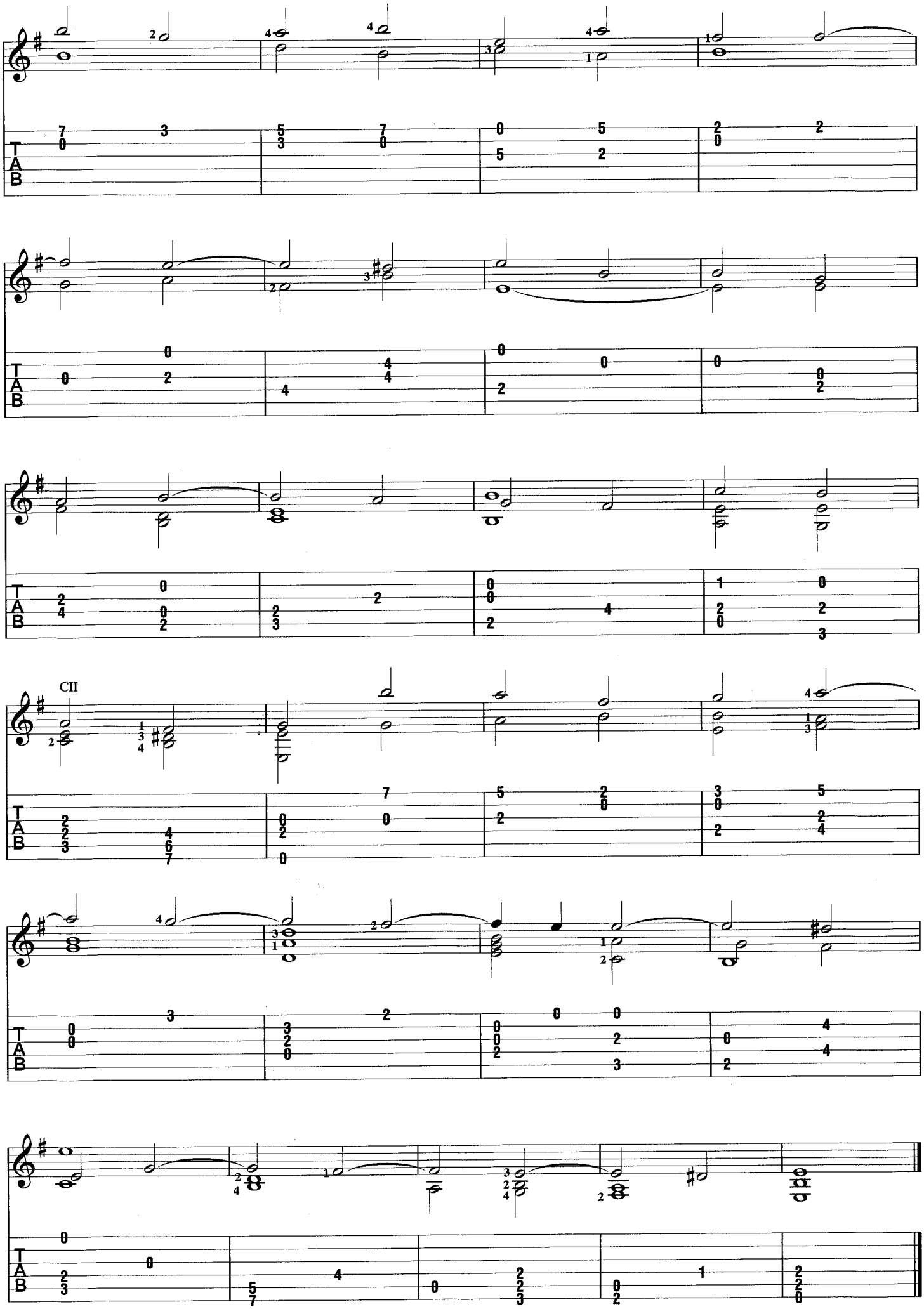
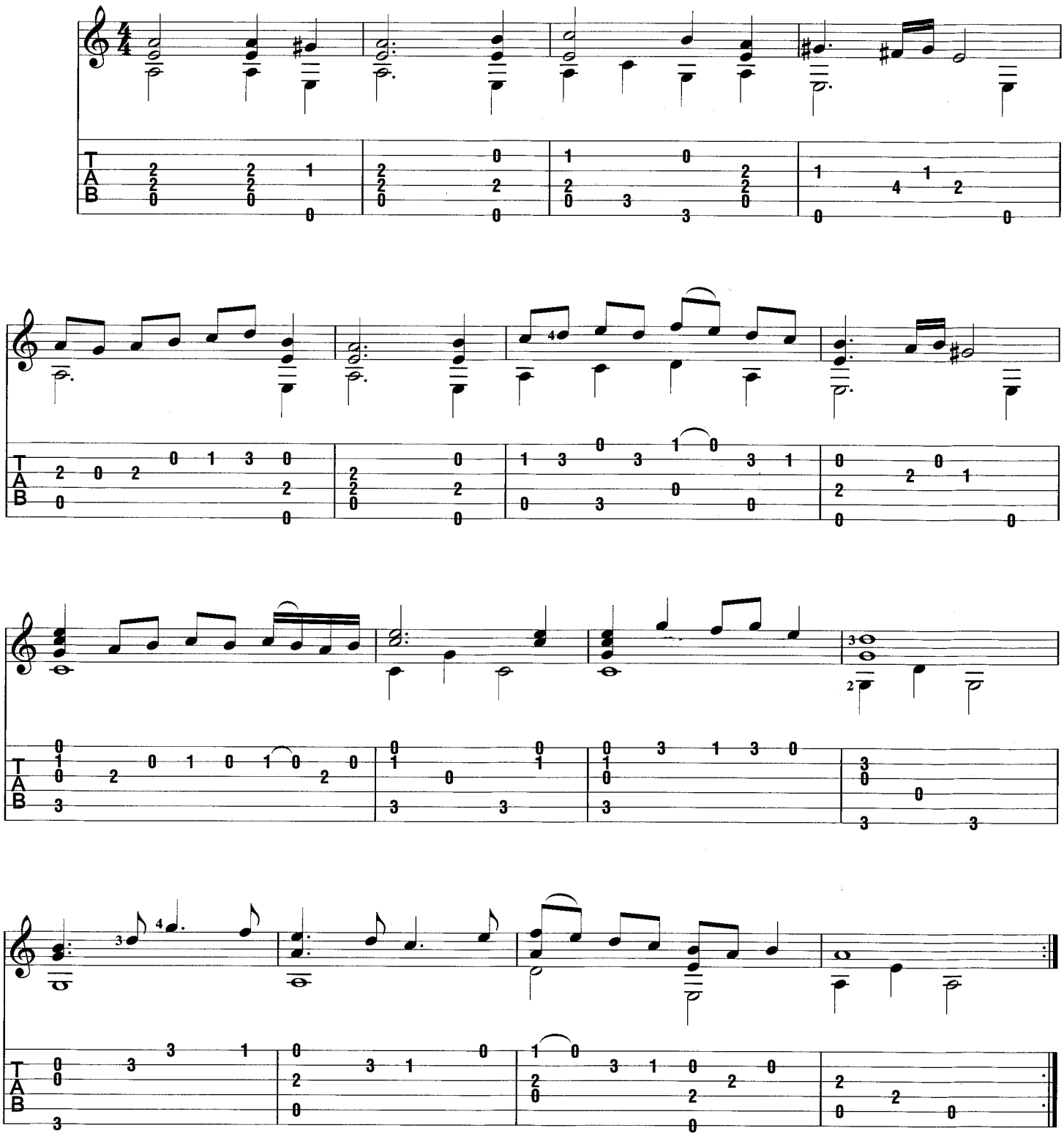

CII

# Fortune My Foe

John Dowland (1563–1626)

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 82



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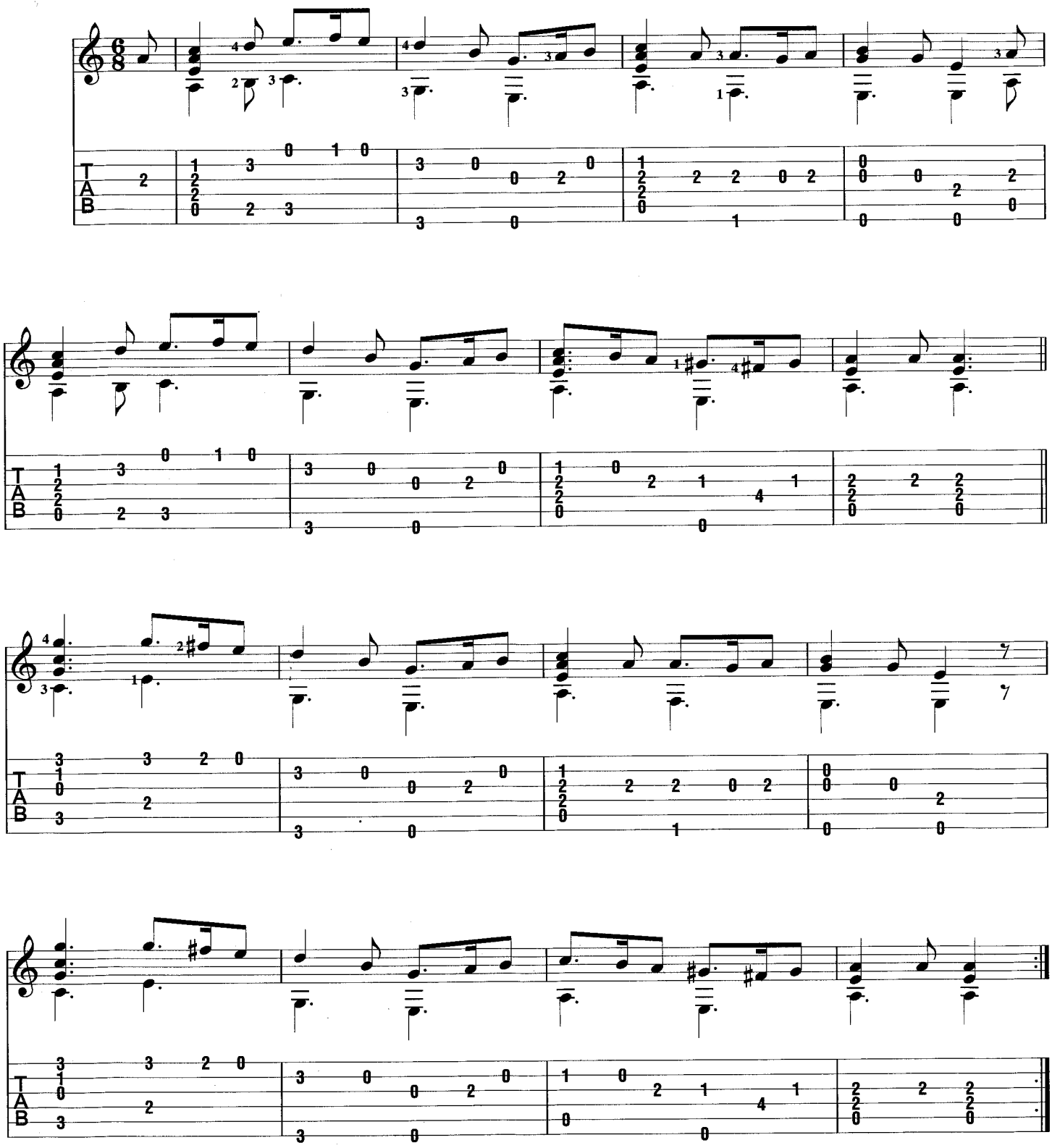
# Greensleeves

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 100



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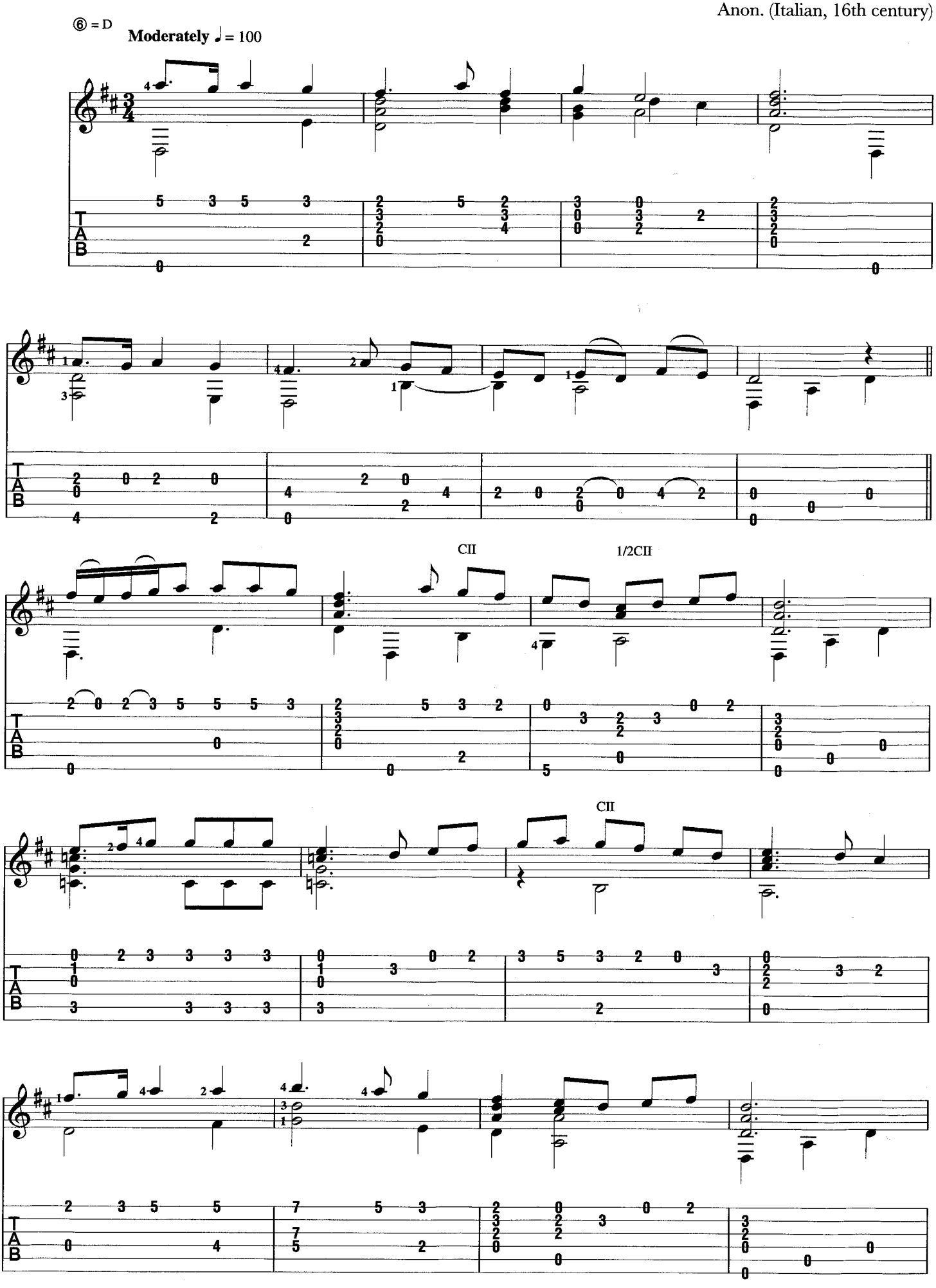
# Galliard

Anon. (Italian, 16th century)



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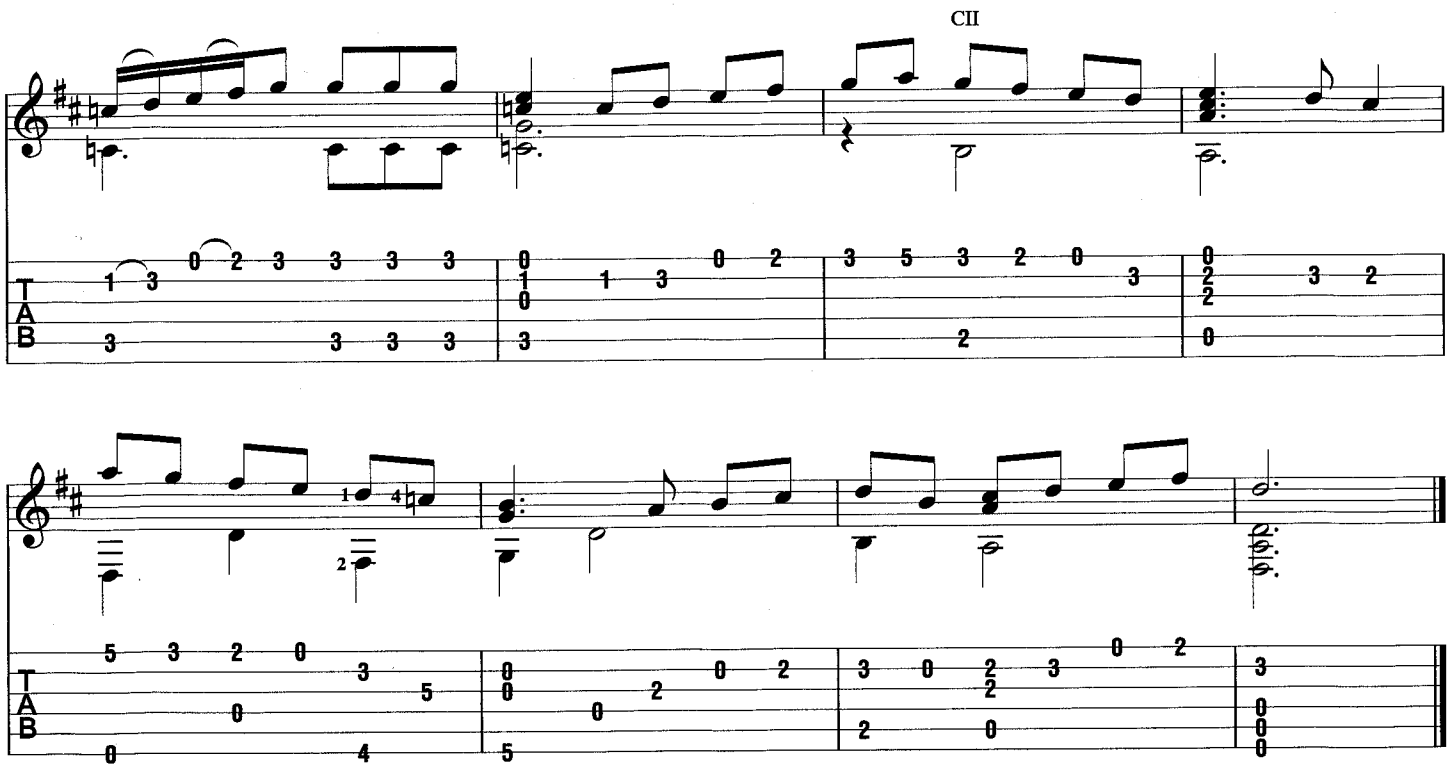
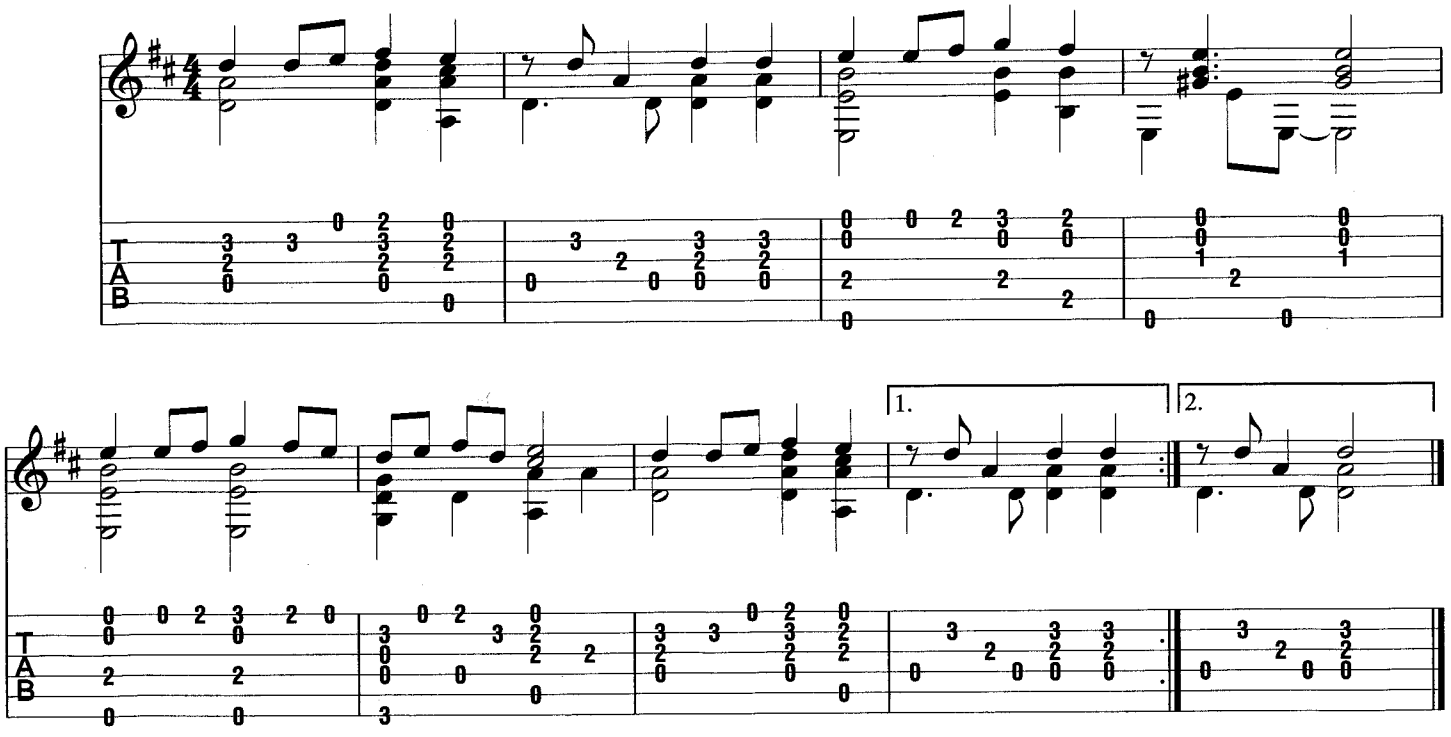



# Go From My Window

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩= 78

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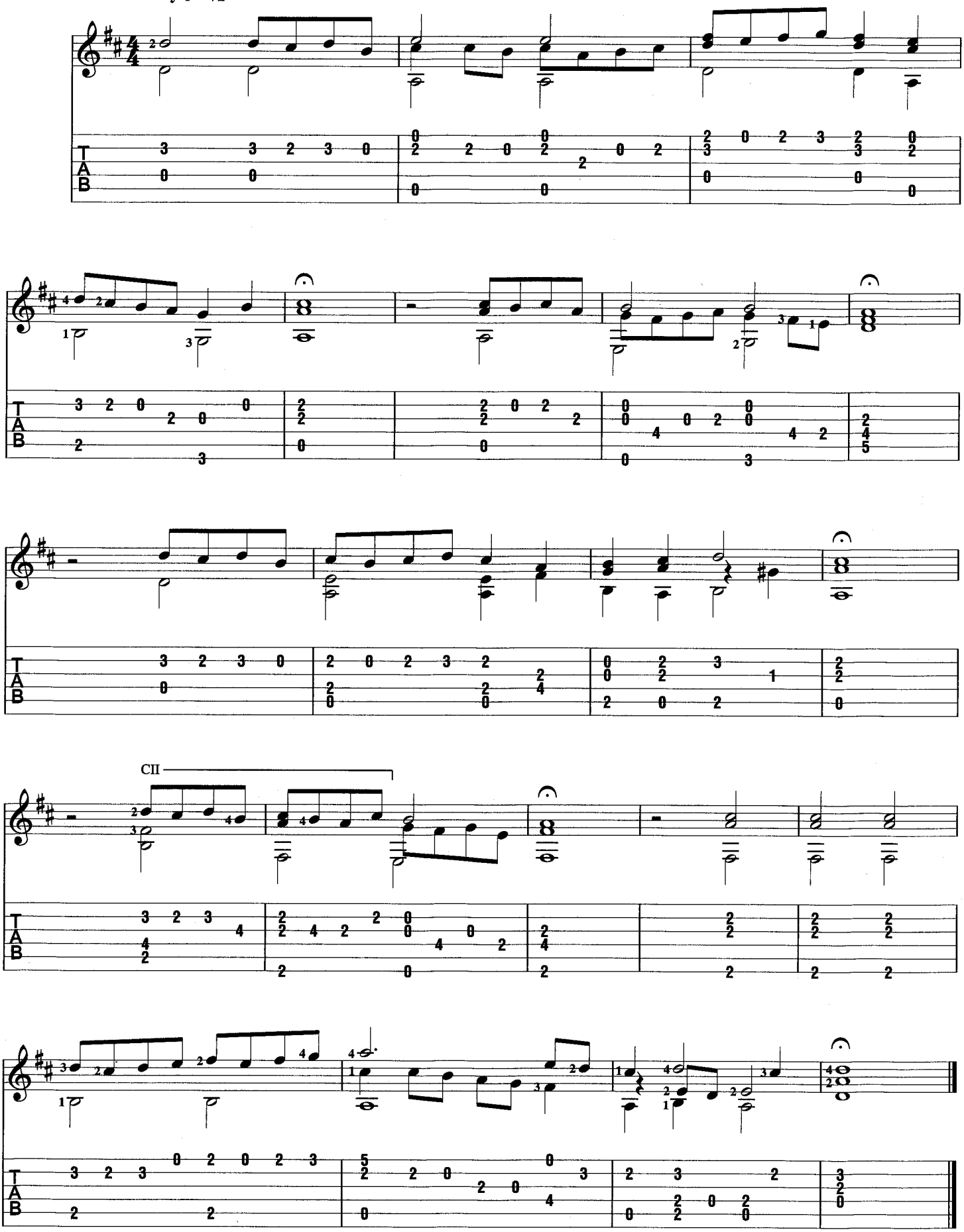
# Ich Klag Den Tag

Hans Neusidler (c.1580–1563)

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 72

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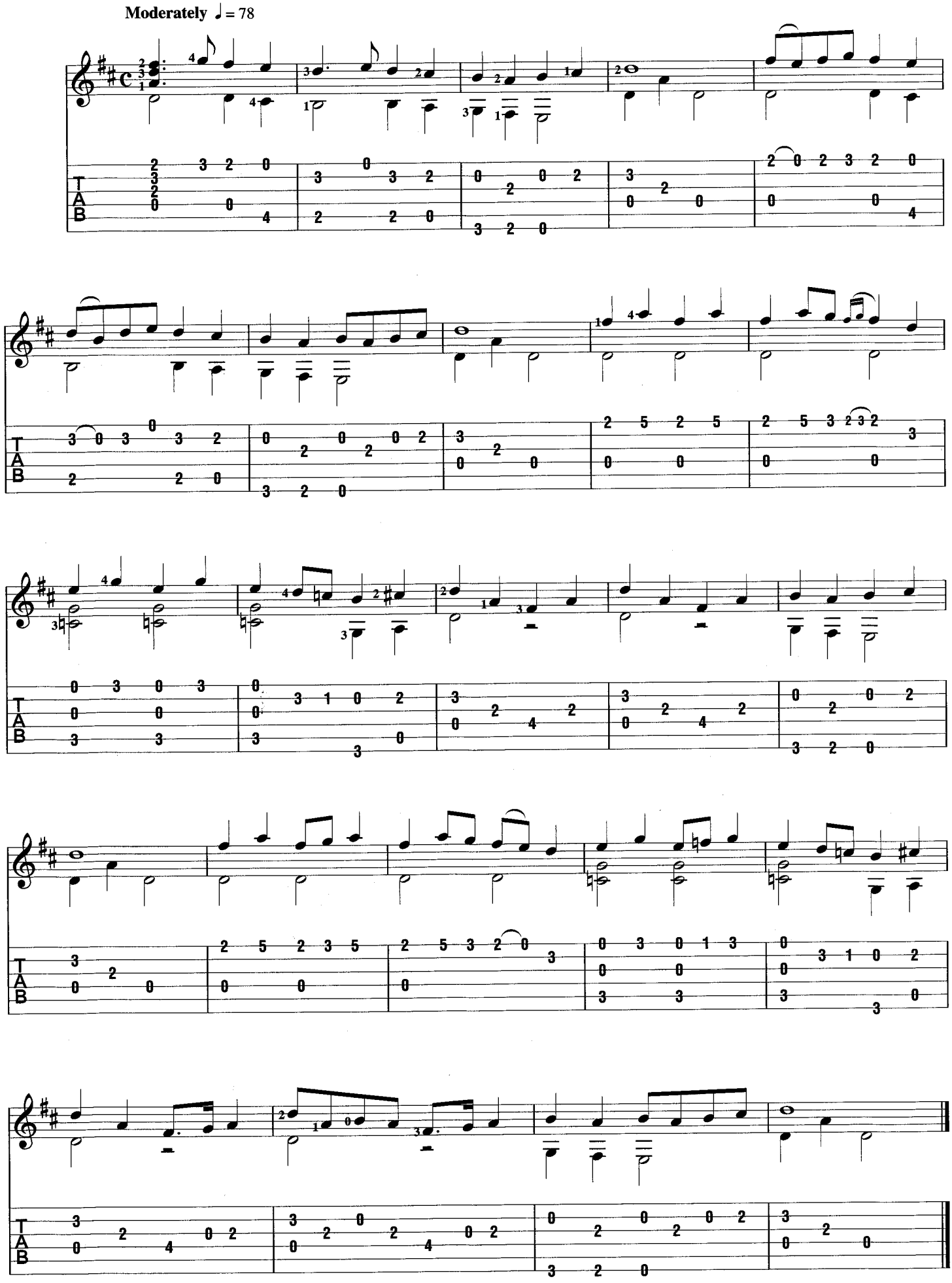
# Kemp's Jig

Anon. (English, 16th century)

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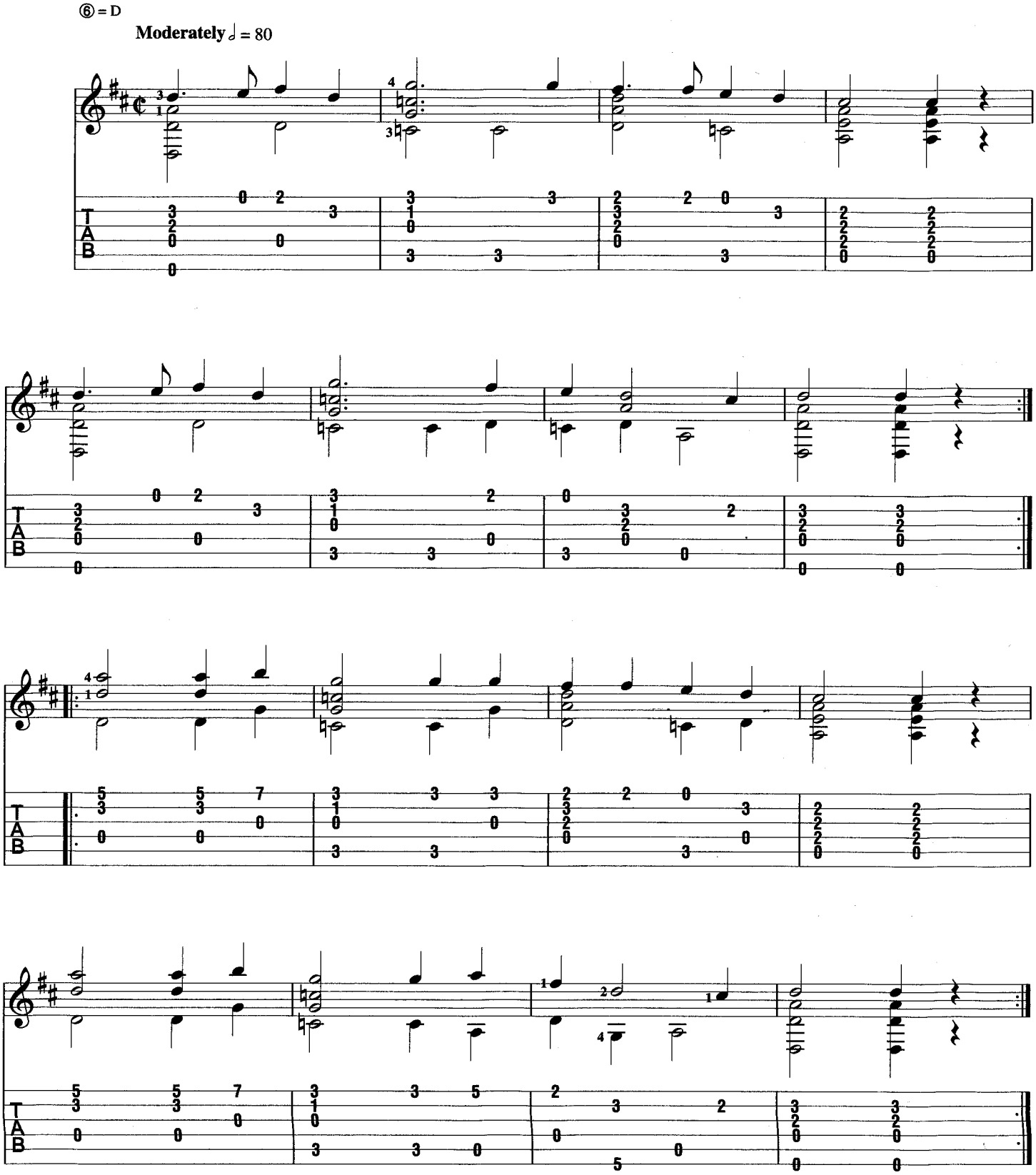
# Les Bouffons

Jean d' Estrées (d.1576)

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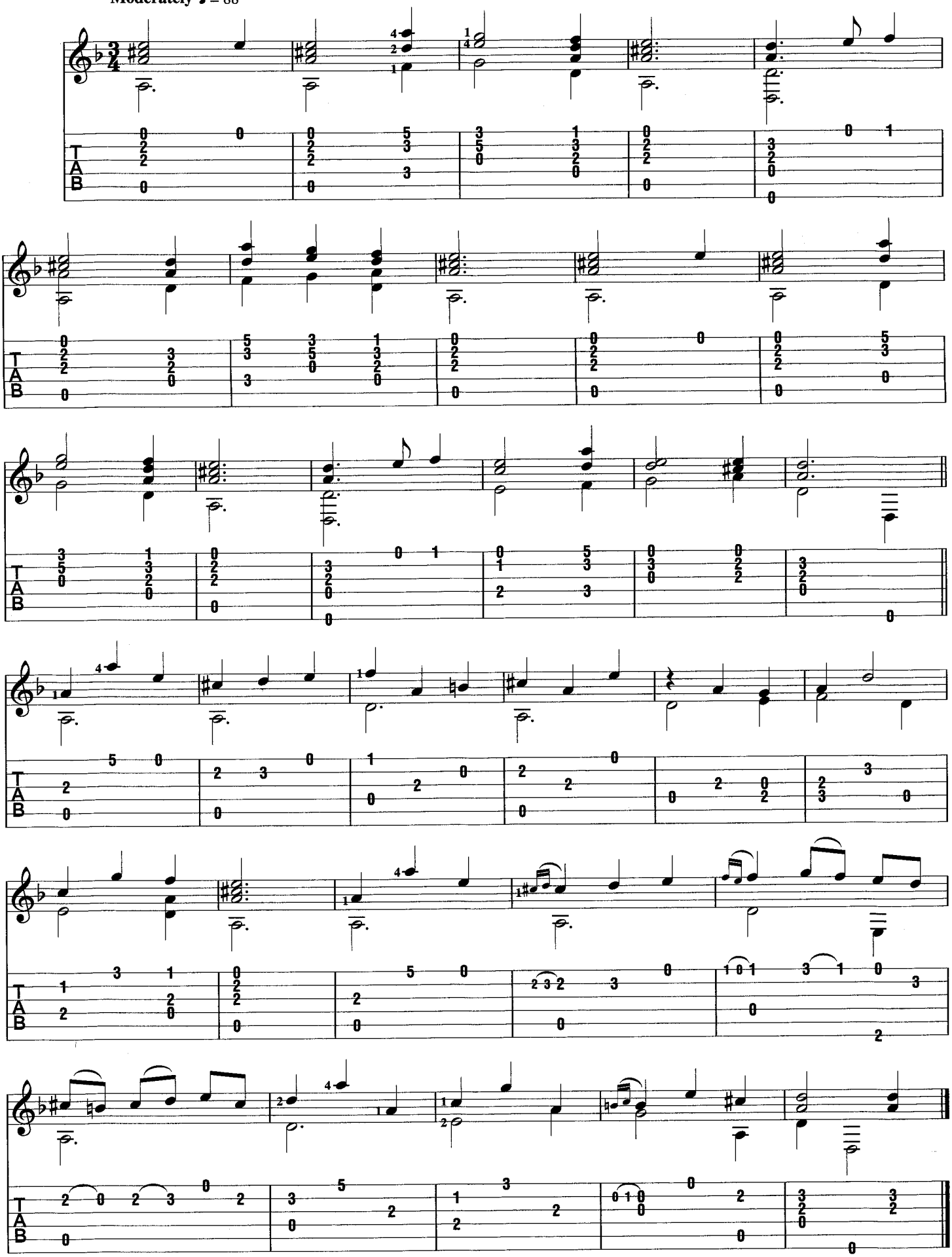
# Loath To Depart

Anon. (English, 16th century)

⑥ = D

**Moderately** ♩ = 88



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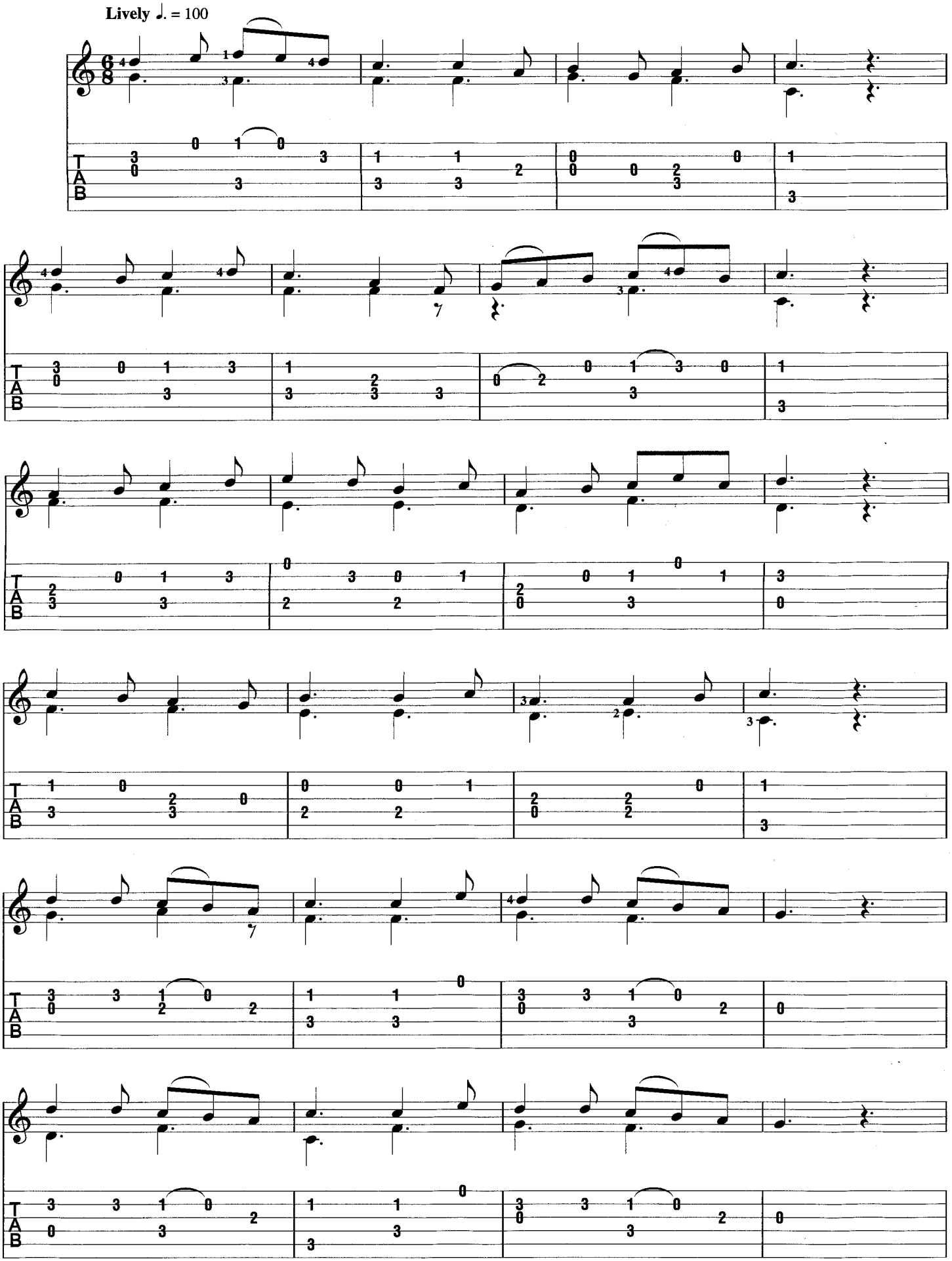
# Medieval Dance

Anon. (late 13th century)

*Capo II*

**Lively** ♩. = 100



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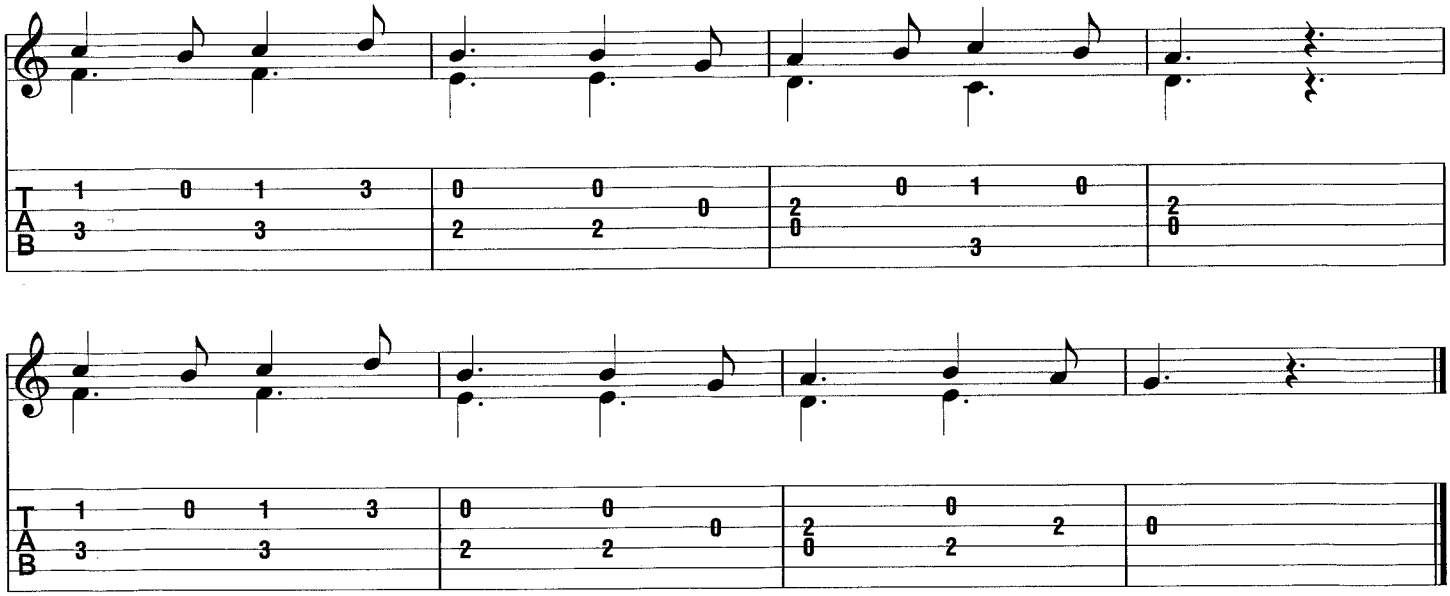


# How Should I Your True Love Know?

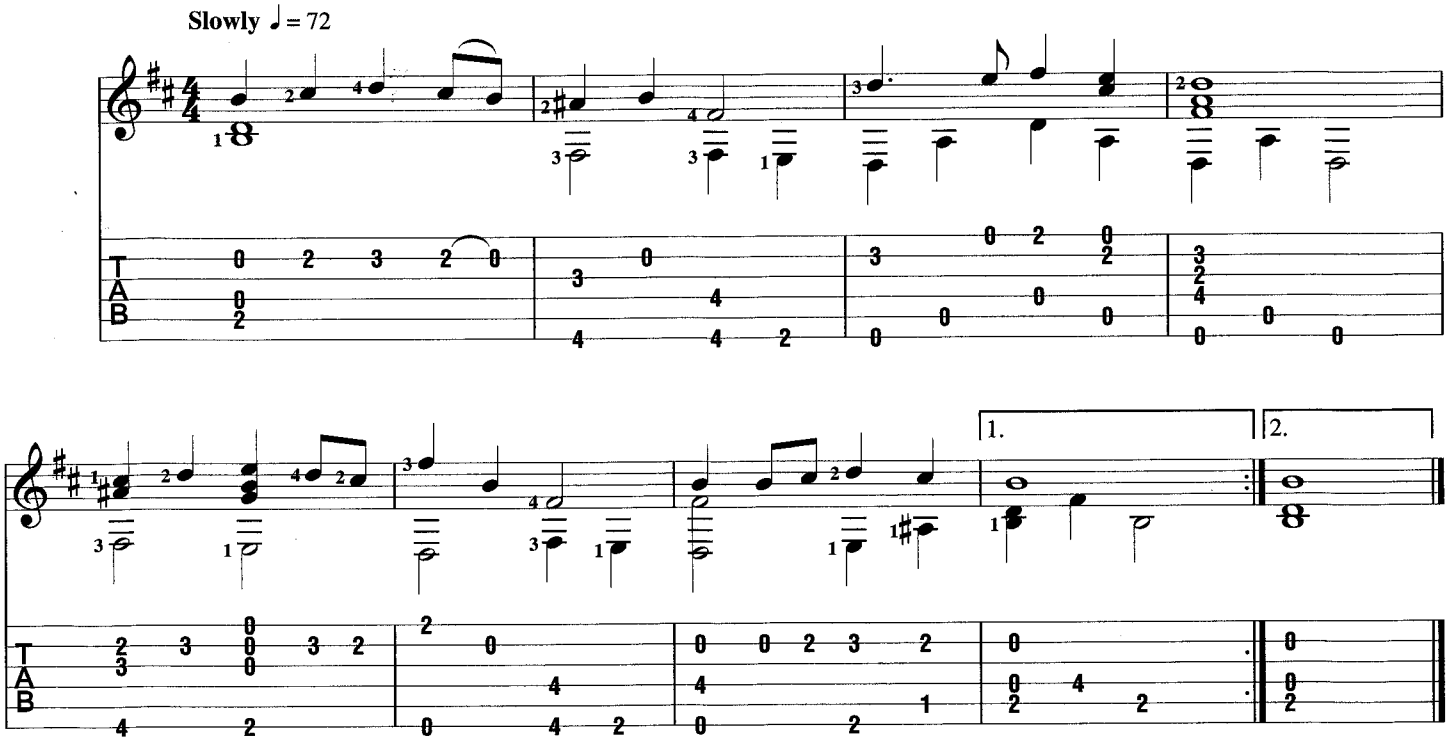
(from *Hamlet*)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

⑥ = D

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 72



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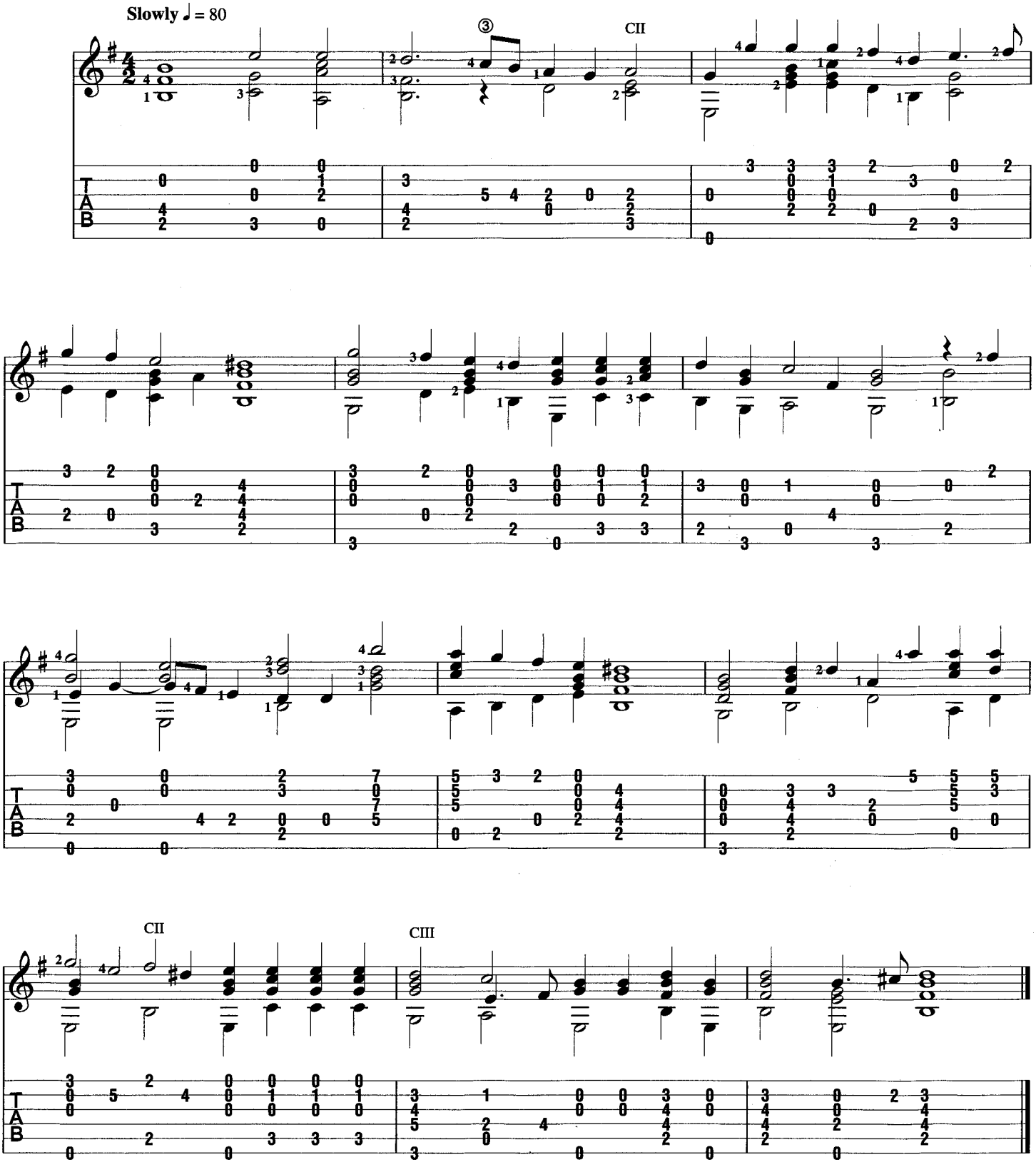
# Mille Regretz

Josquin des Prez (c.1450–1521)

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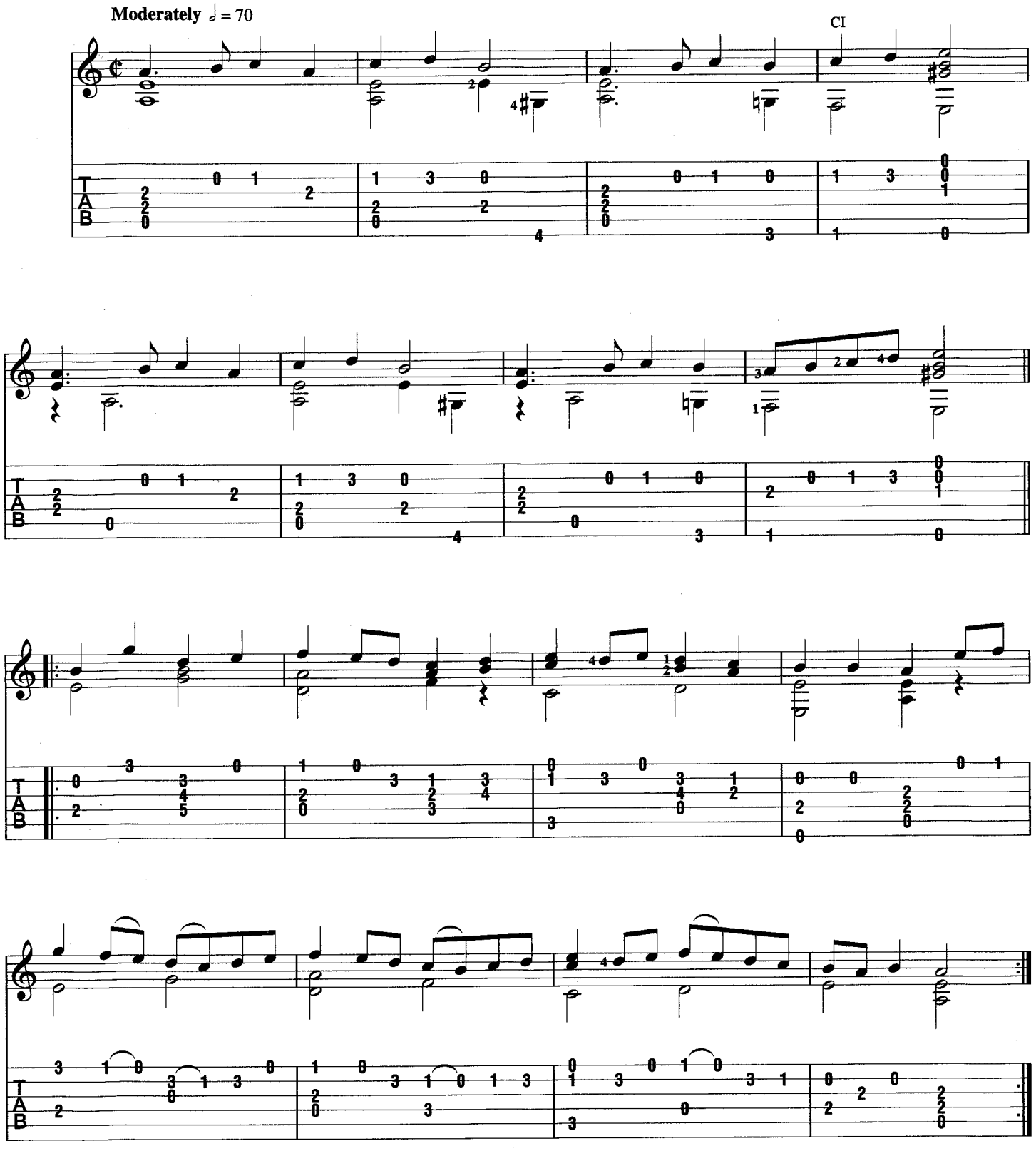
# Mr. Dowland's Midnight

John Dowland

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 70

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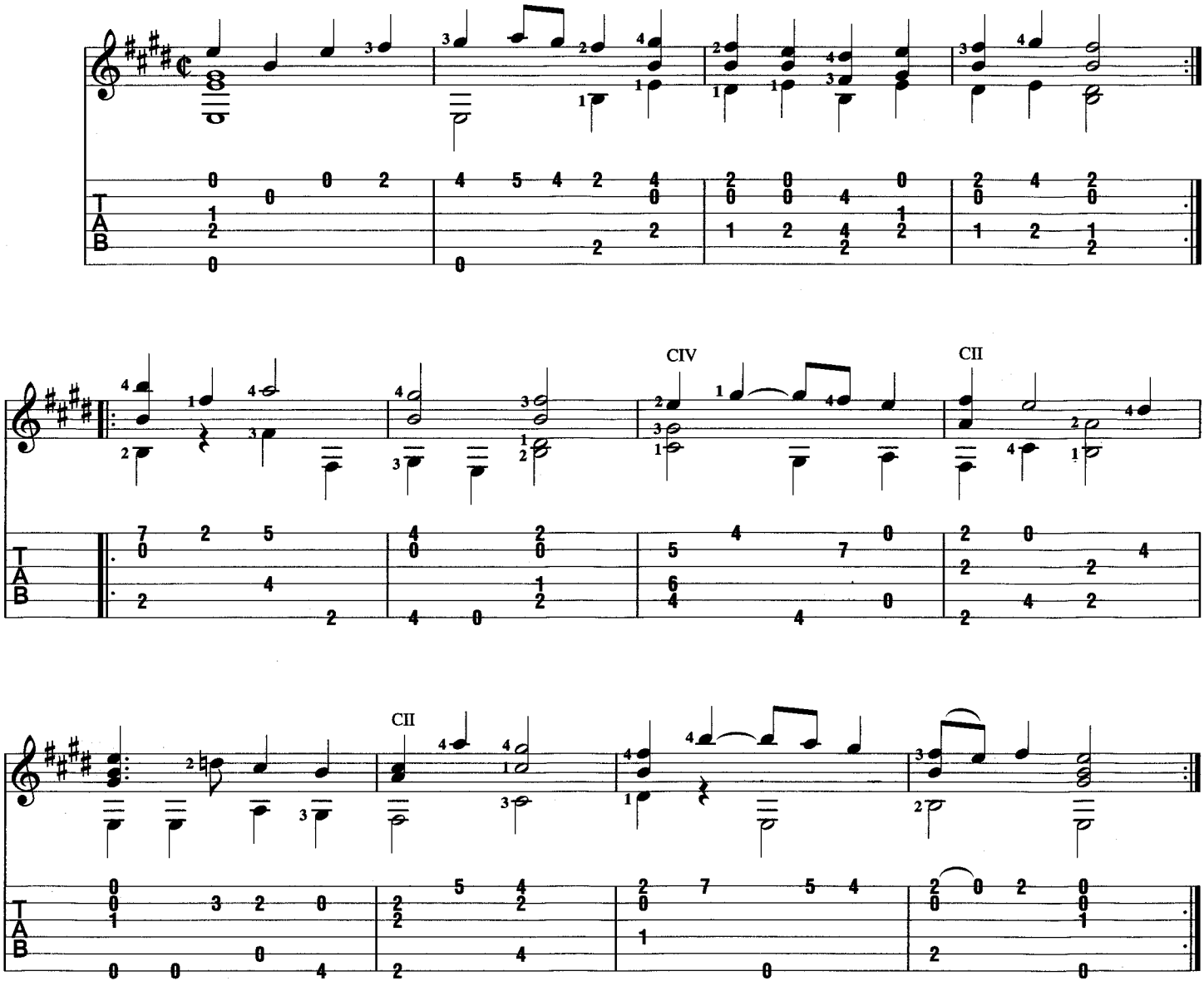
# Mrs. Nichols' Almain

John Dowland

*Capo II*

**Stately** ♩ = 47

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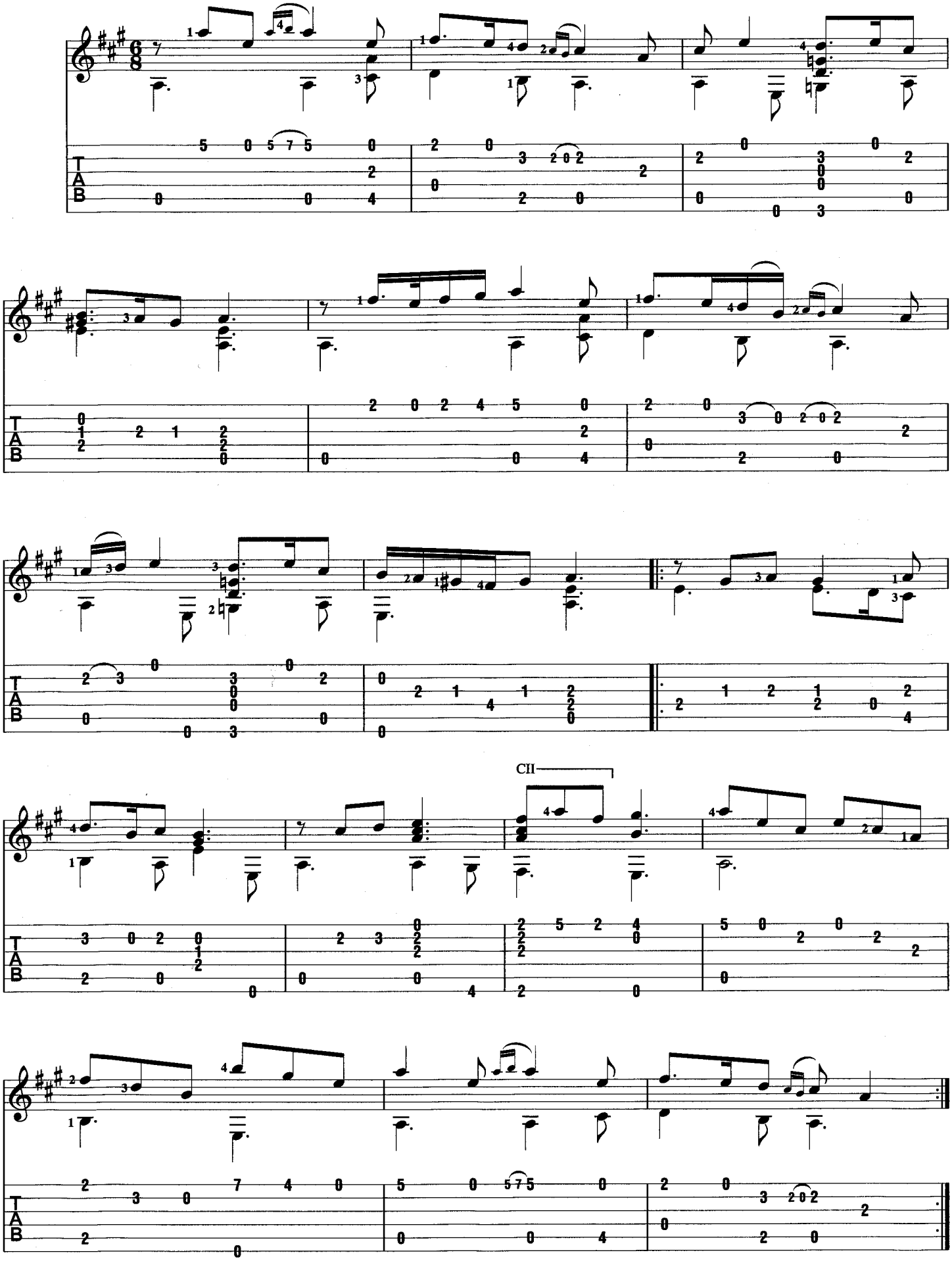
# Mrs. Winter's Jump

John Dowland

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩. = 56

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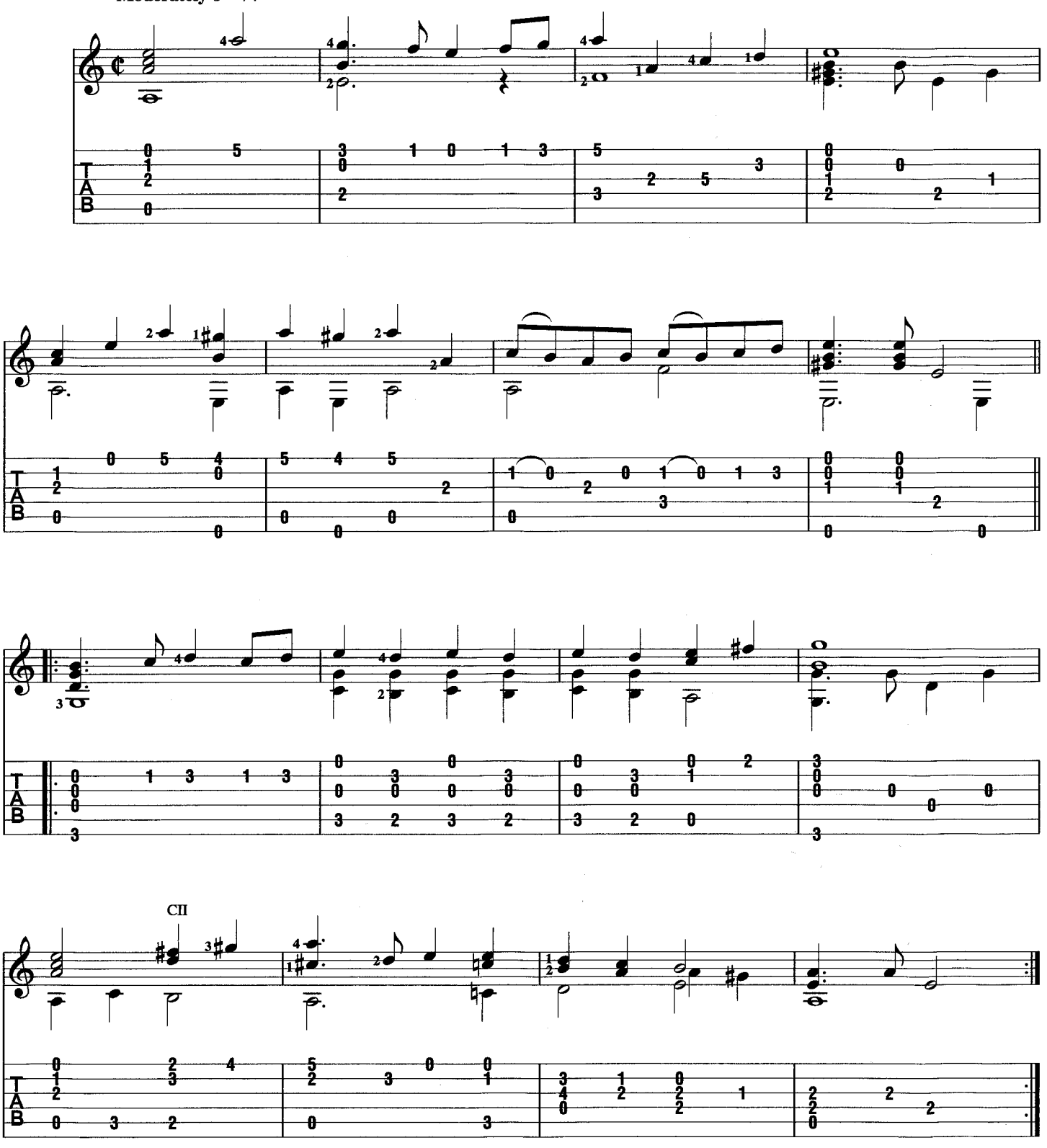
# My Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home

John Dowland

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 74

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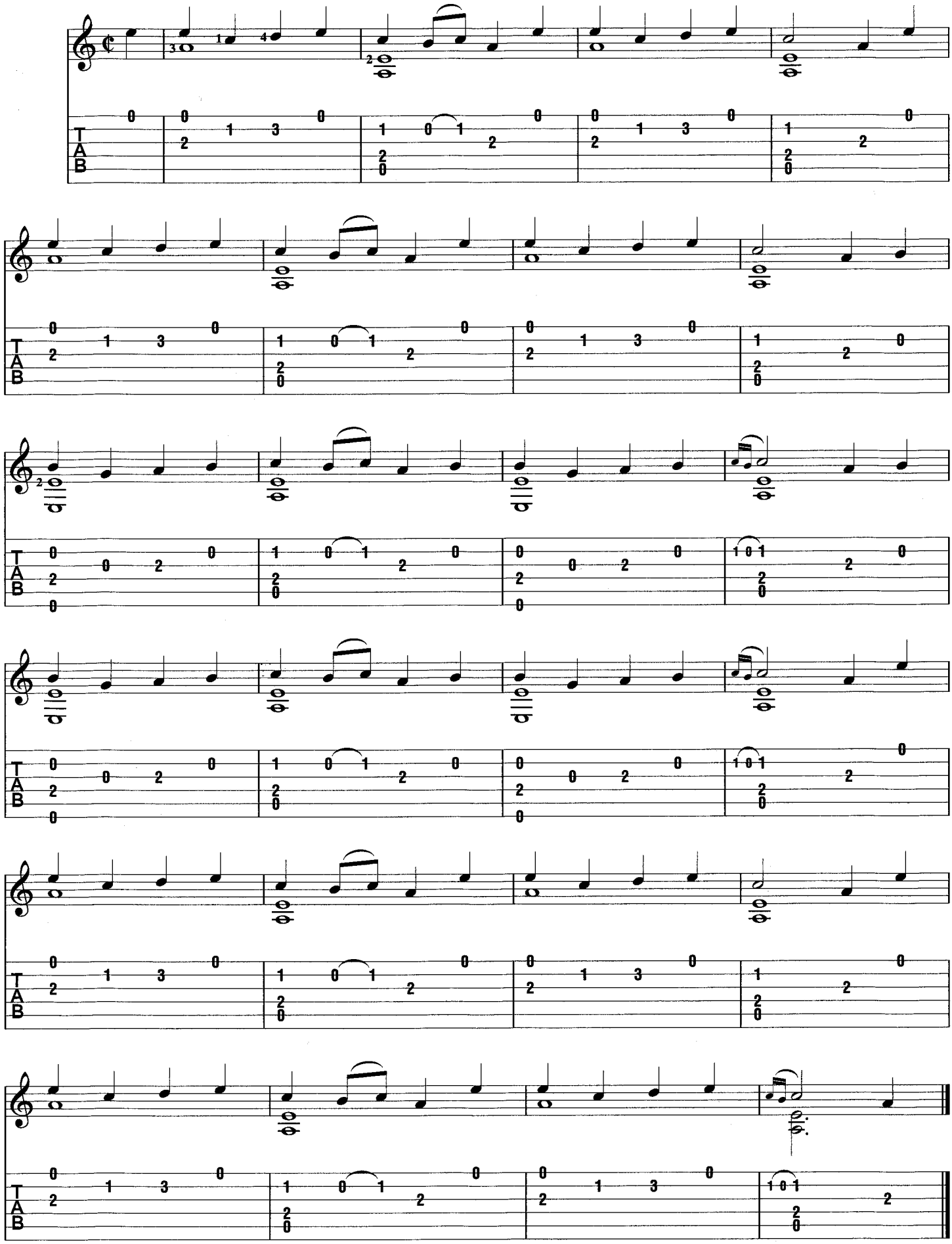
# Nonesuch

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 80



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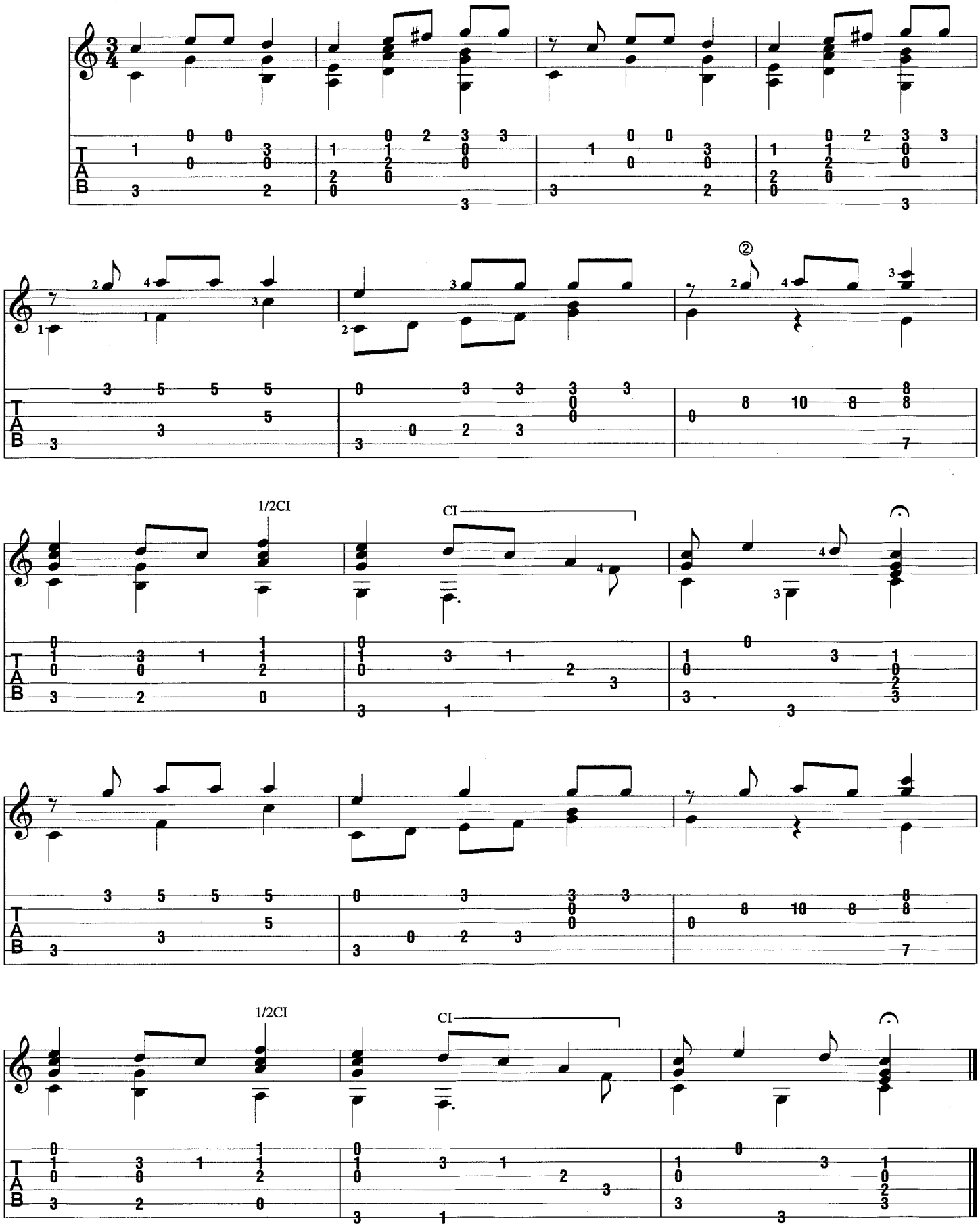
# Oh Mistress Mine

(from *Twelfth Night*)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 60

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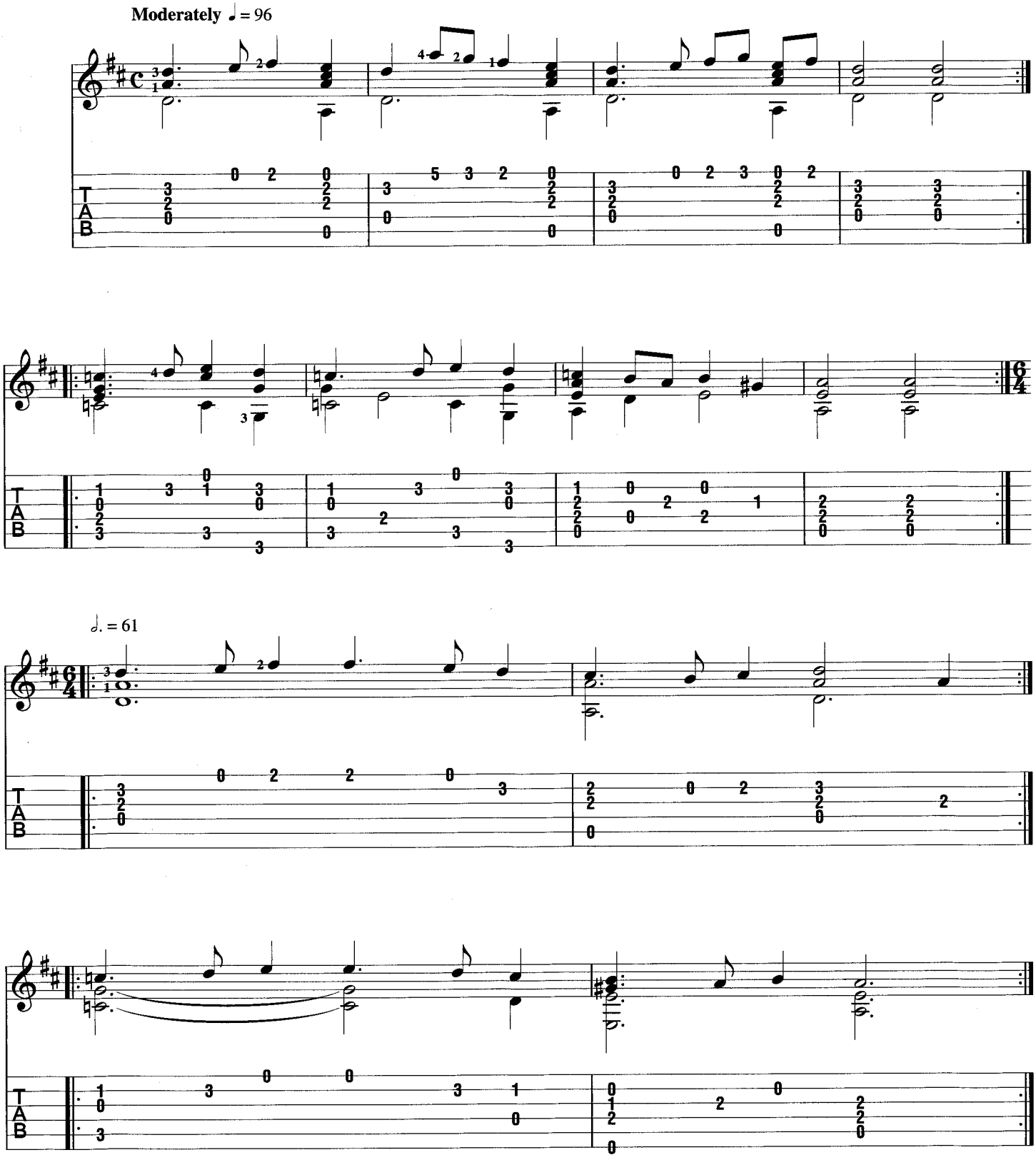
# Orlando Sleepeth

John Dowland

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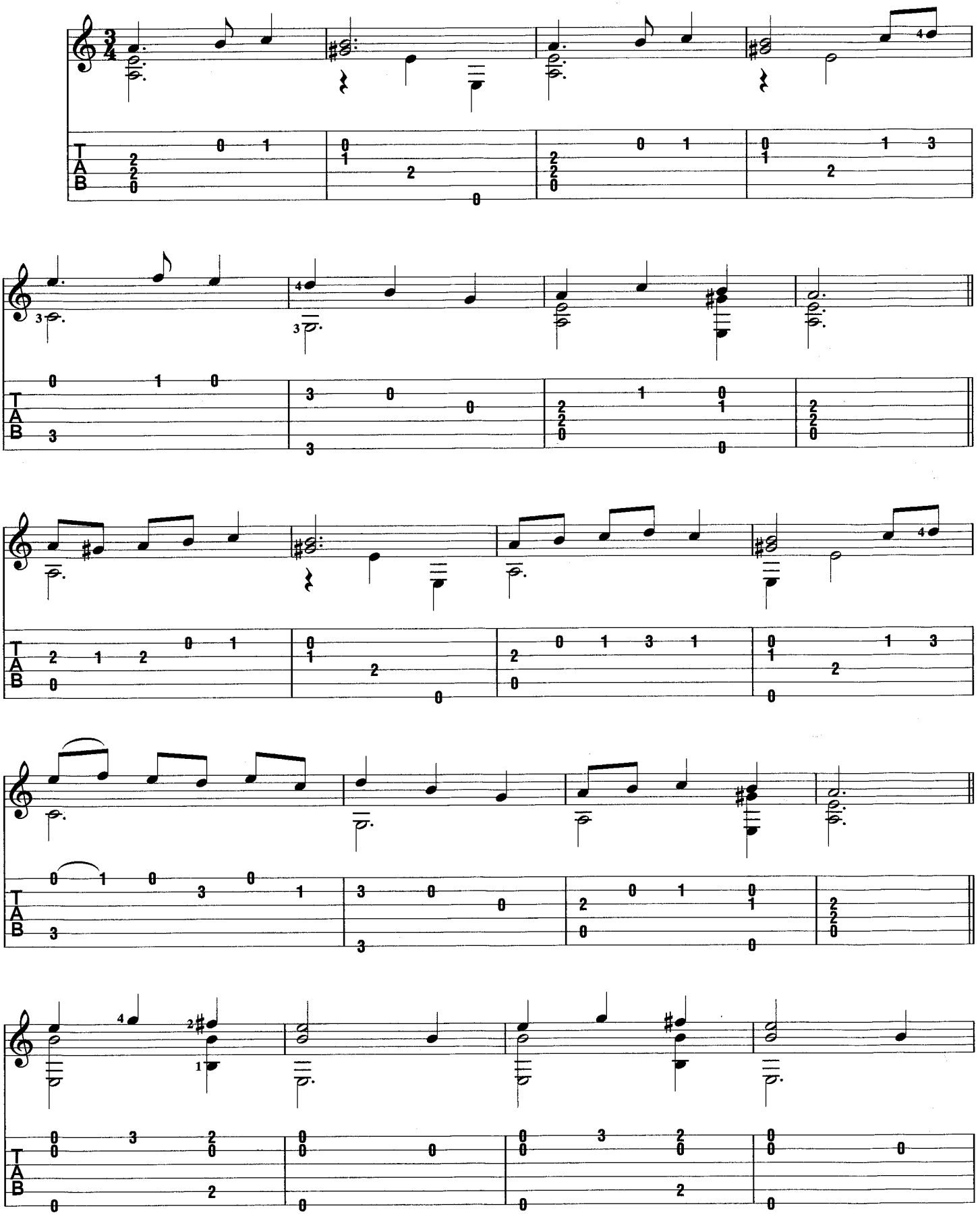
# Packington's Pound

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 45



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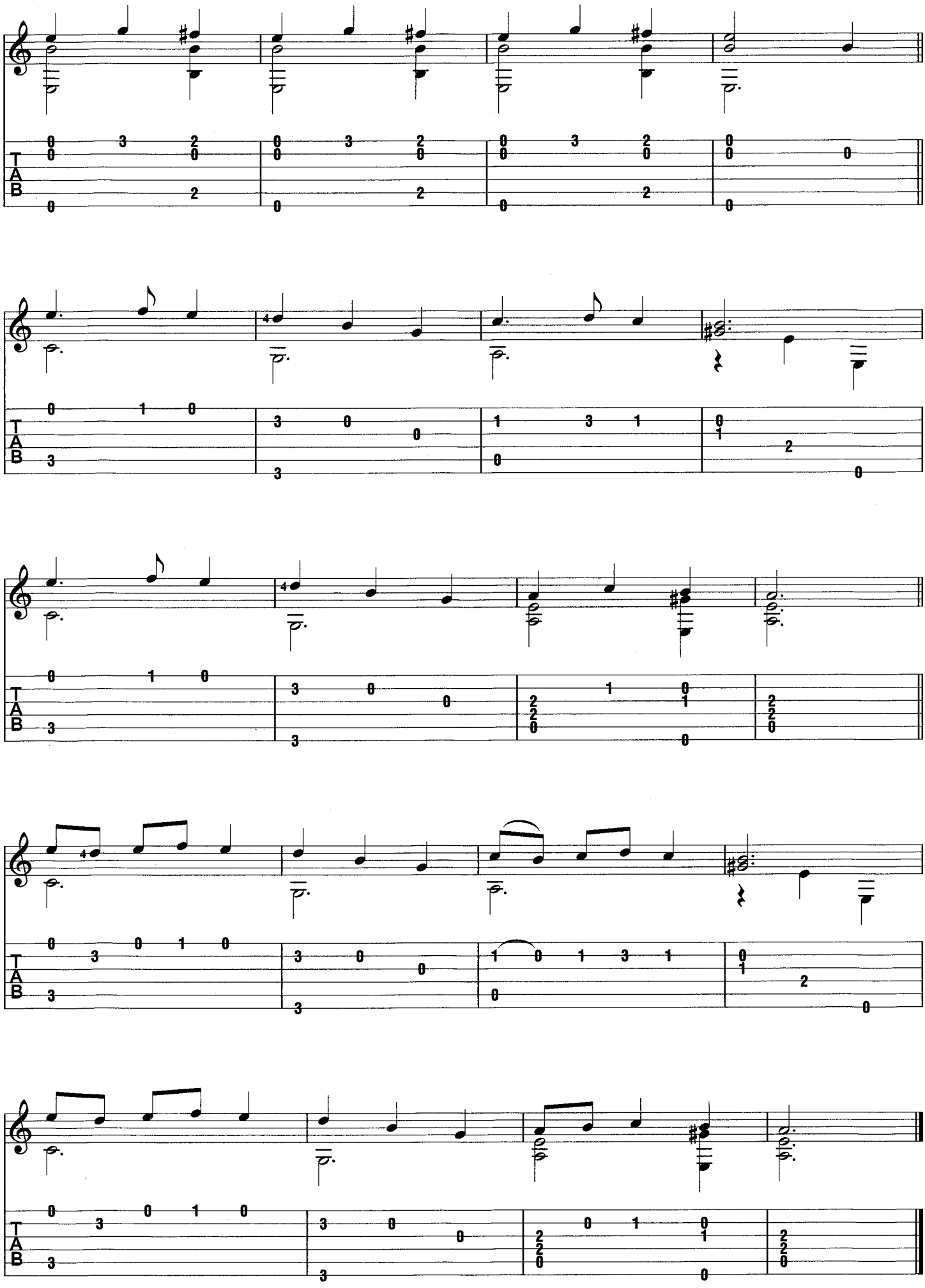
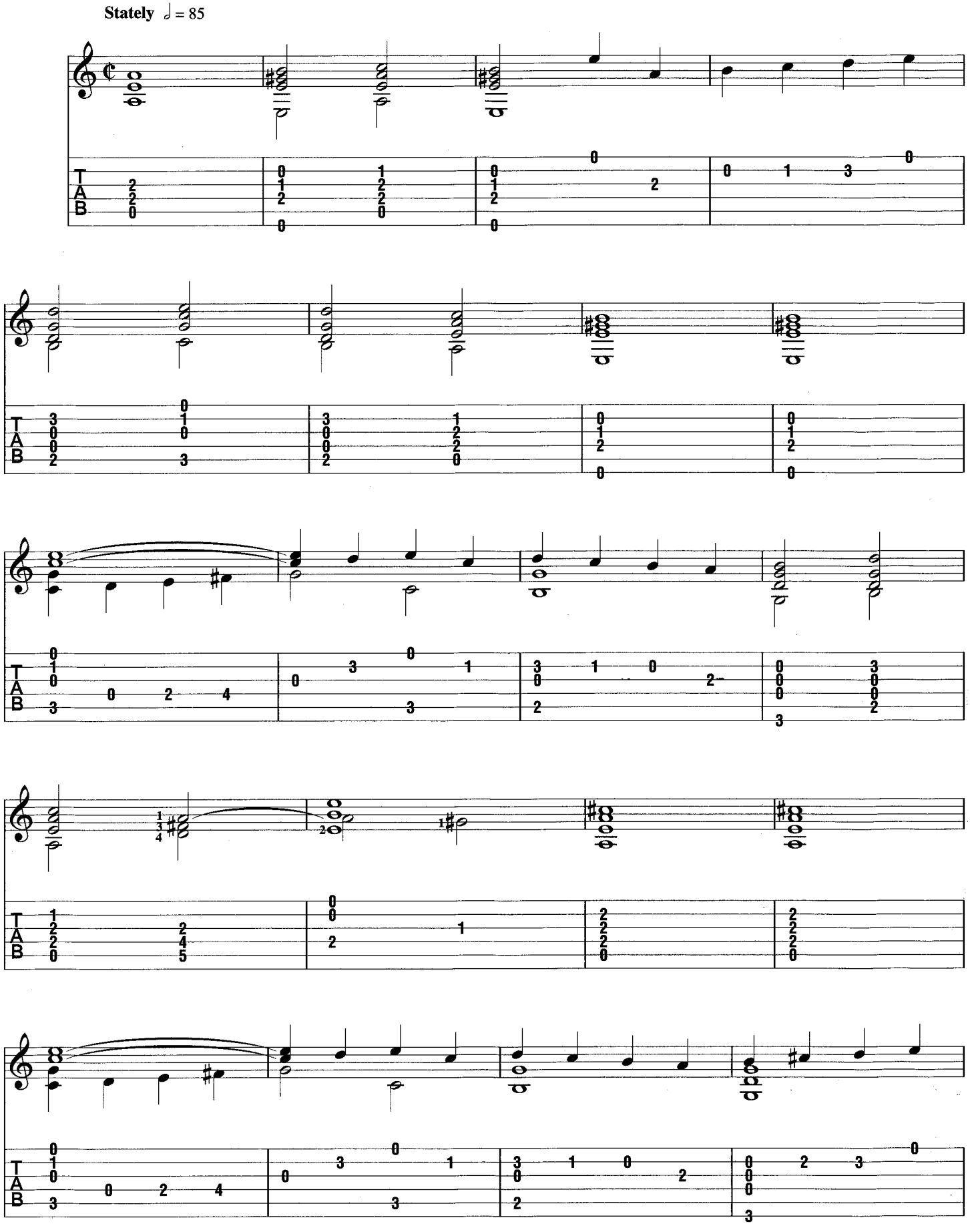


# Pavana I

Luis Milan (c.1500–1561)

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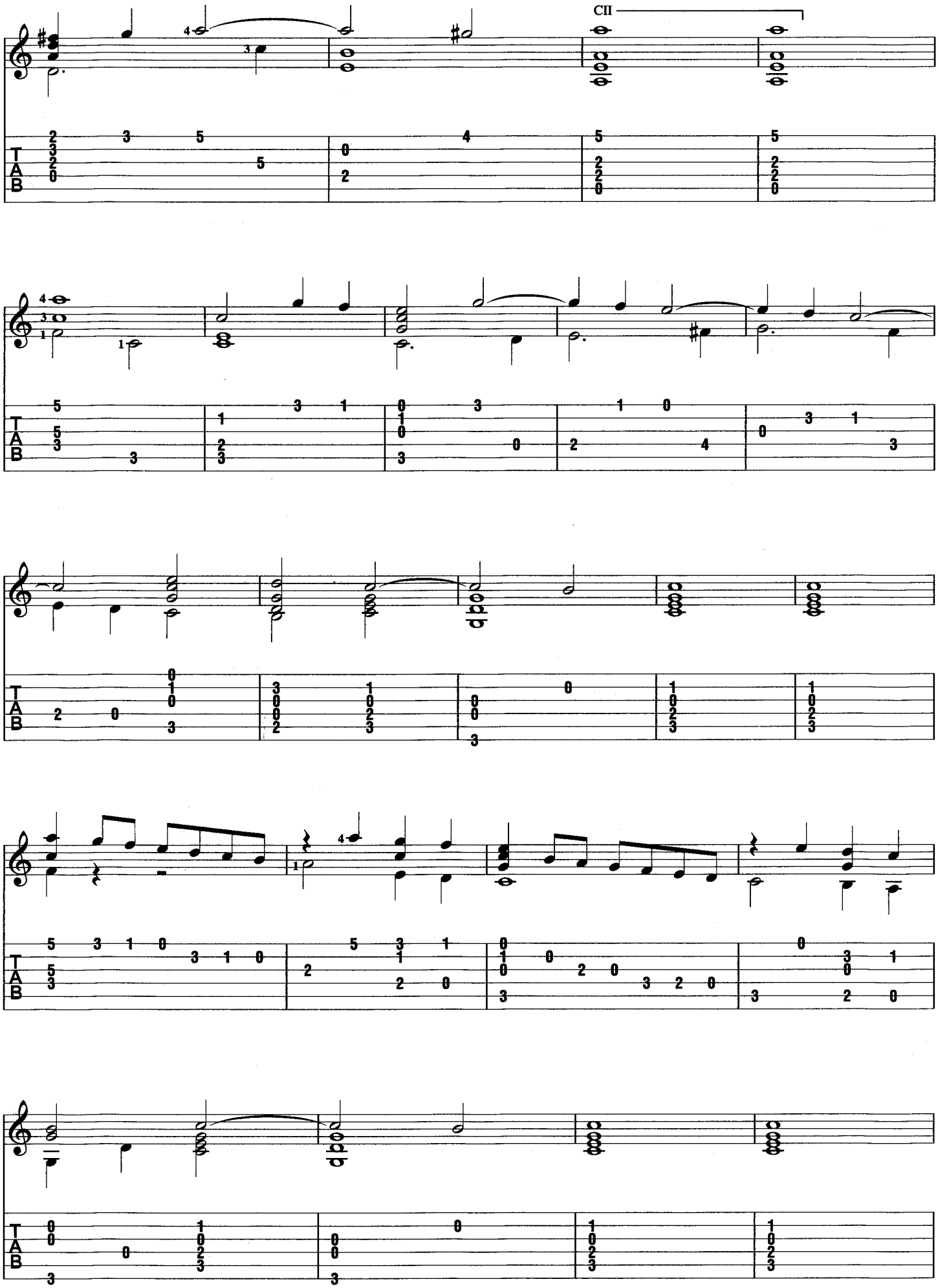
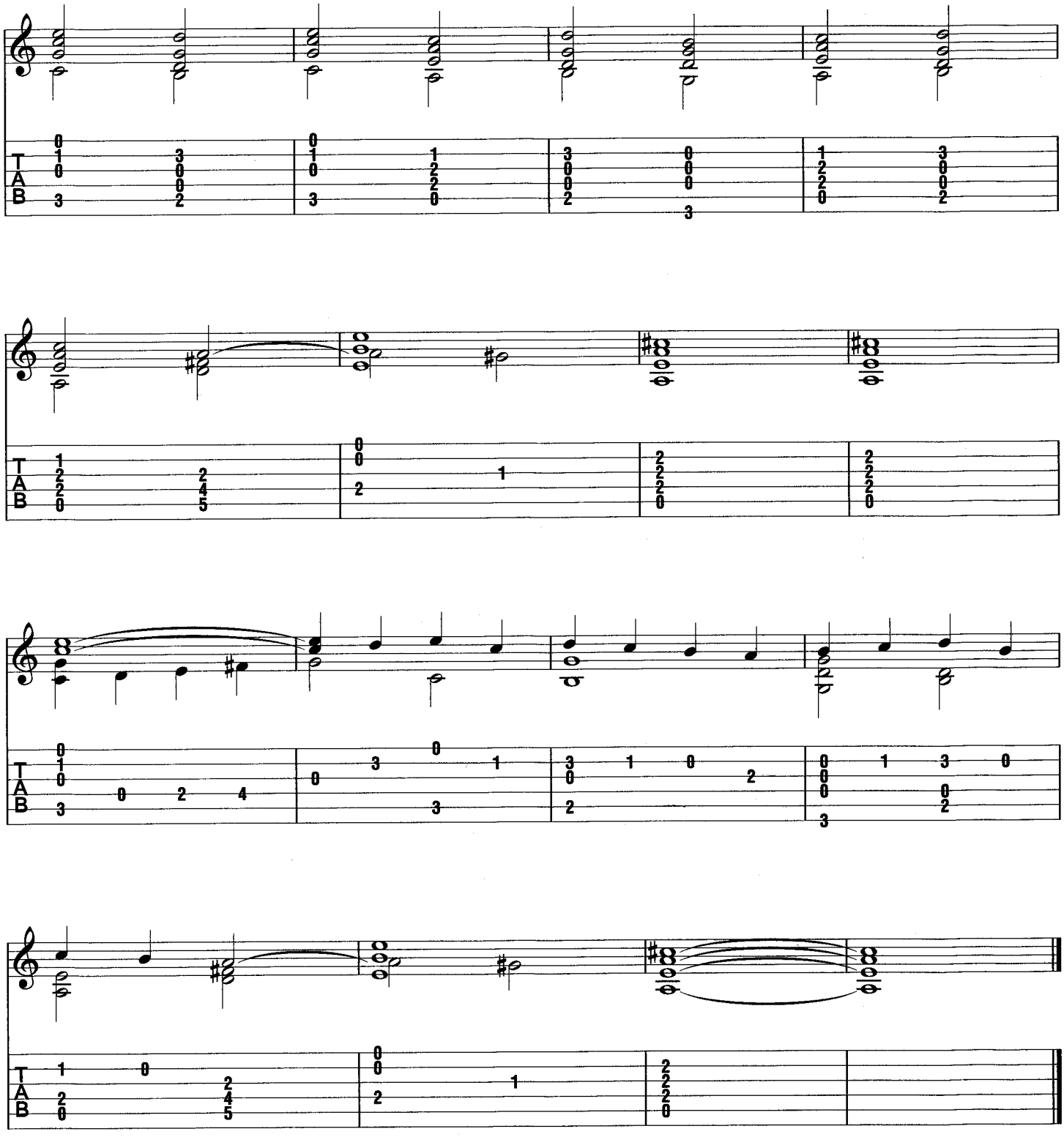
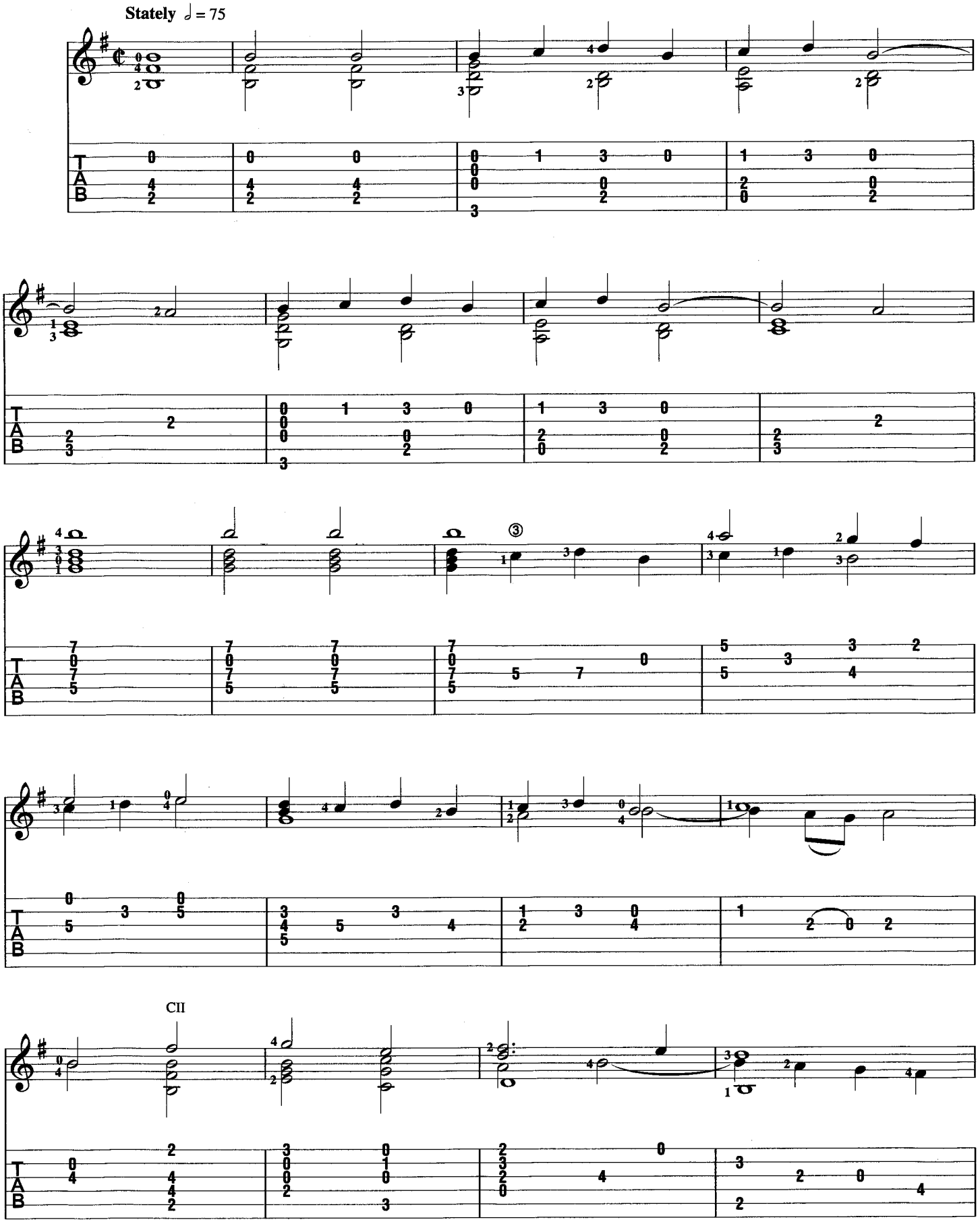

CII



# Pavana II

Luis Milan

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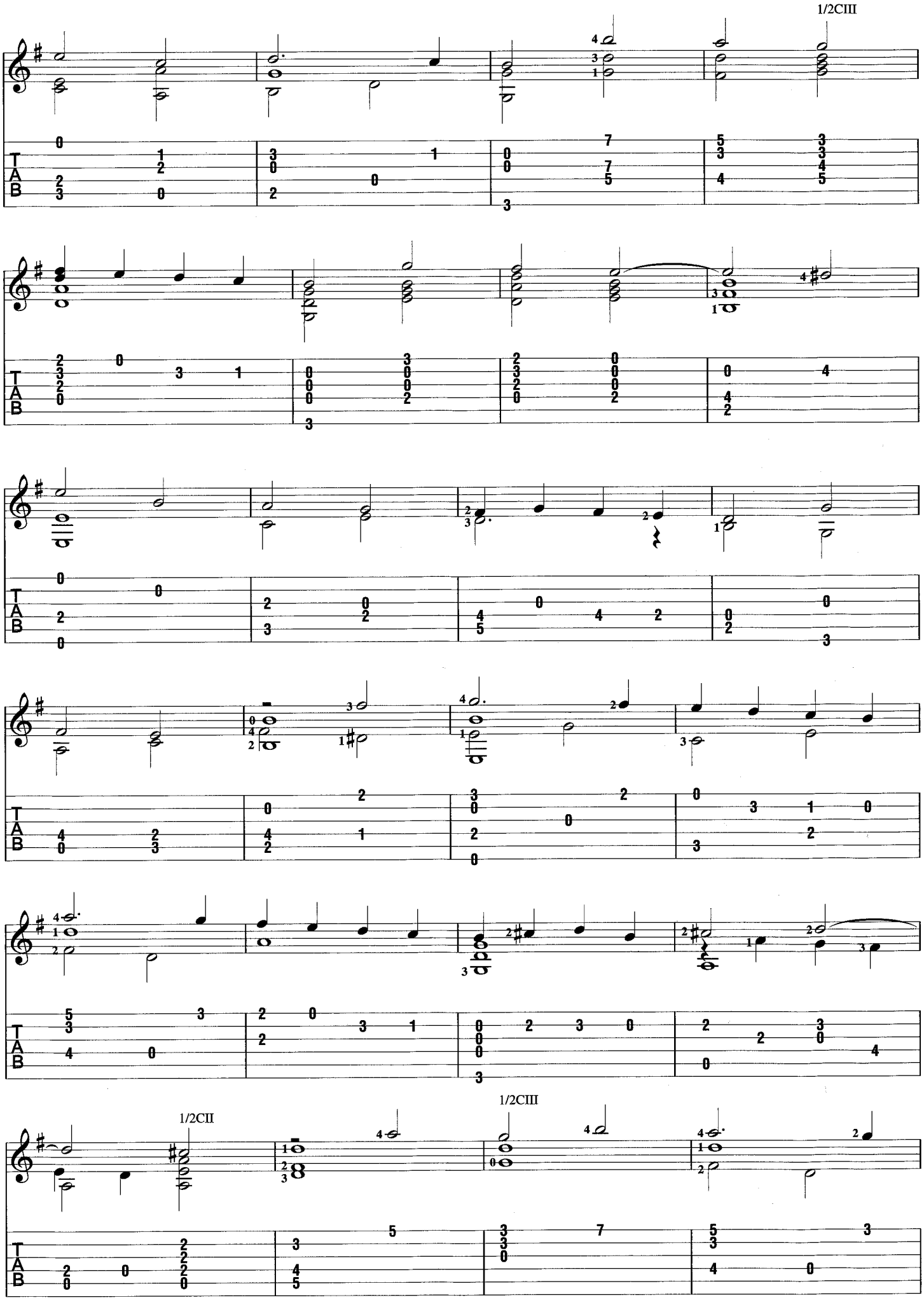
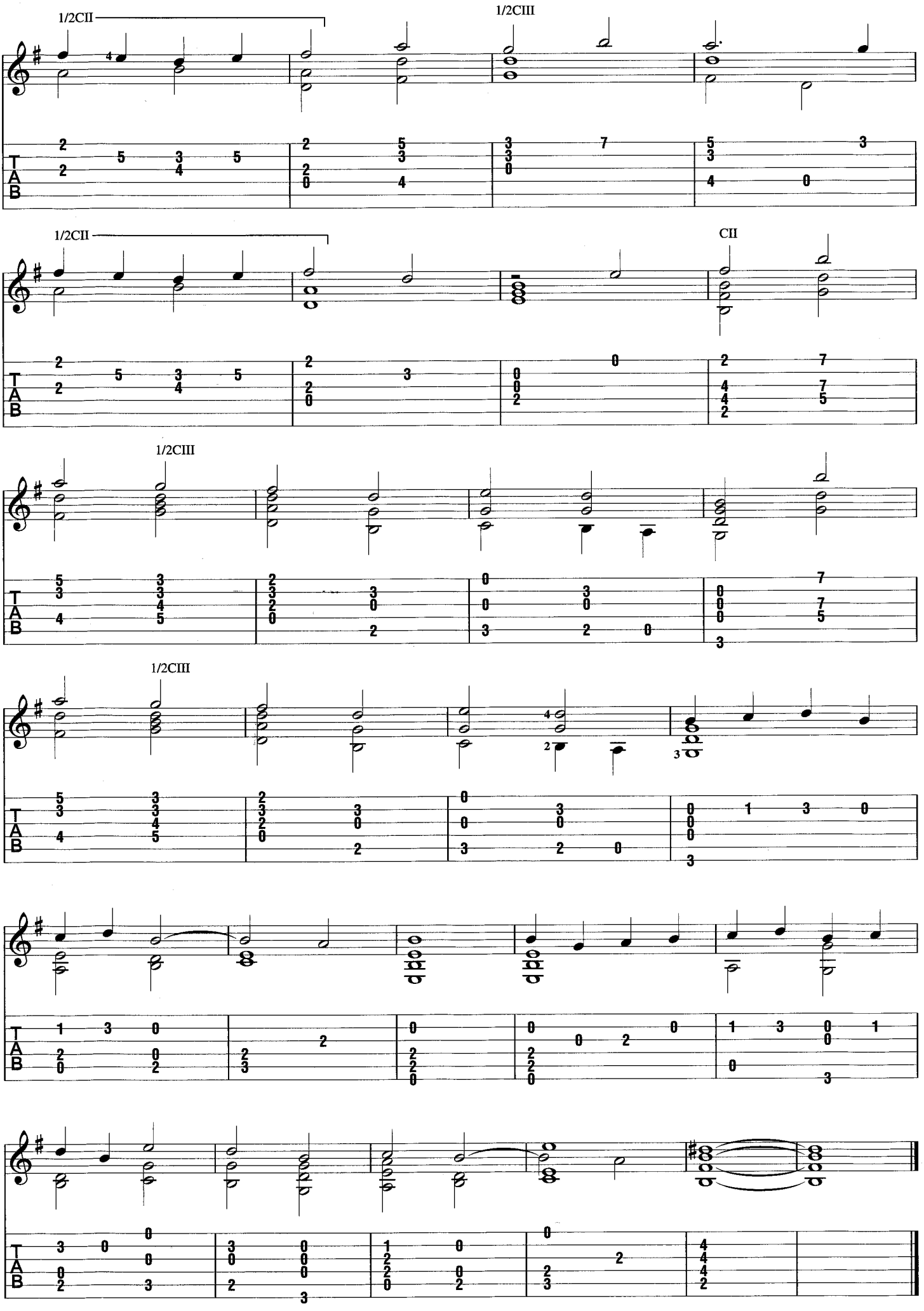

1/2CIII
1/2CII
1/2CIII

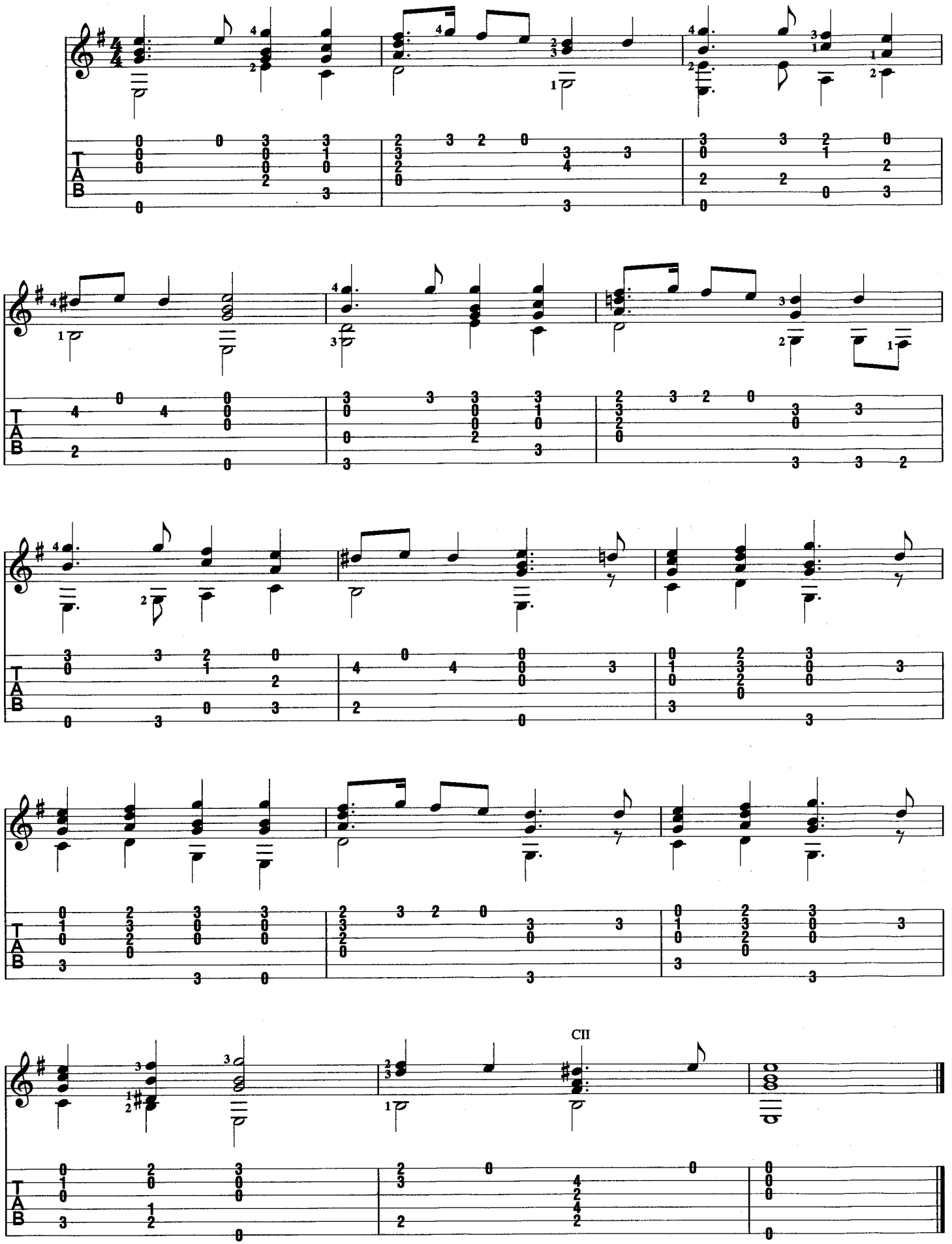

1/2CII
1/2CIII
1/2CII
CII
1/2CIII
1/2CIII

# Pastime With Good Company

Henry VIII (1491–1547)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 94

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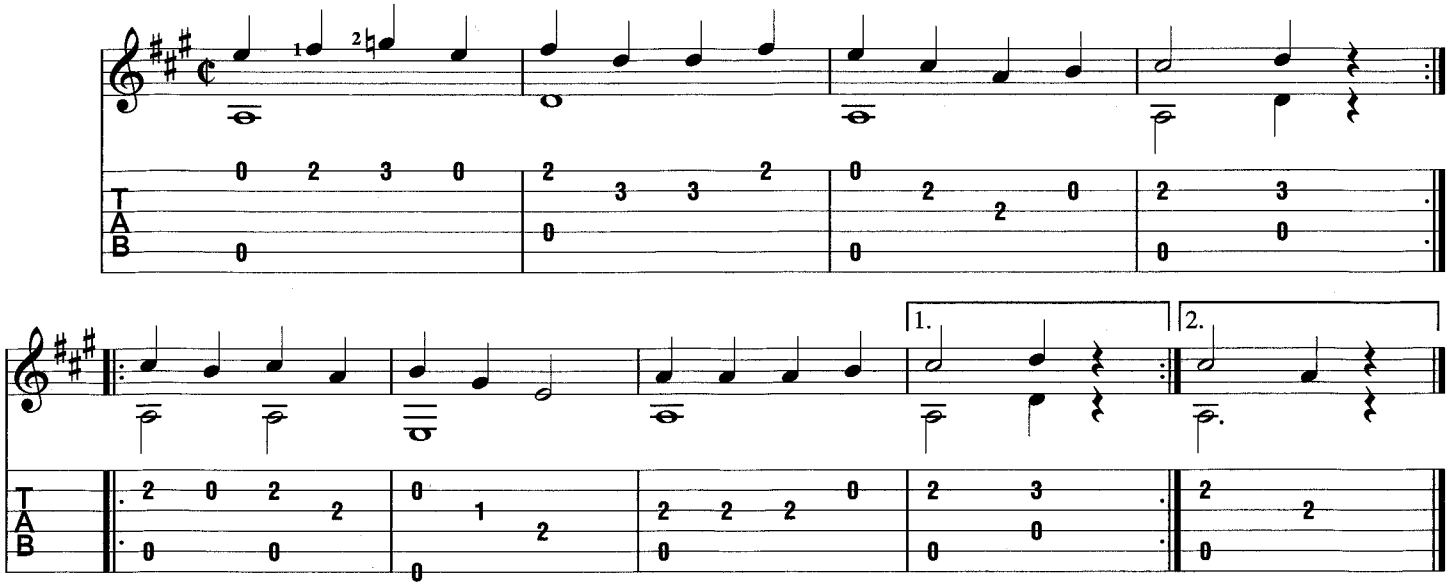
# Peg-A-Ramsey

*Capo II*

Anon. (English, 16th century)

**Moderately** ♩ = 97

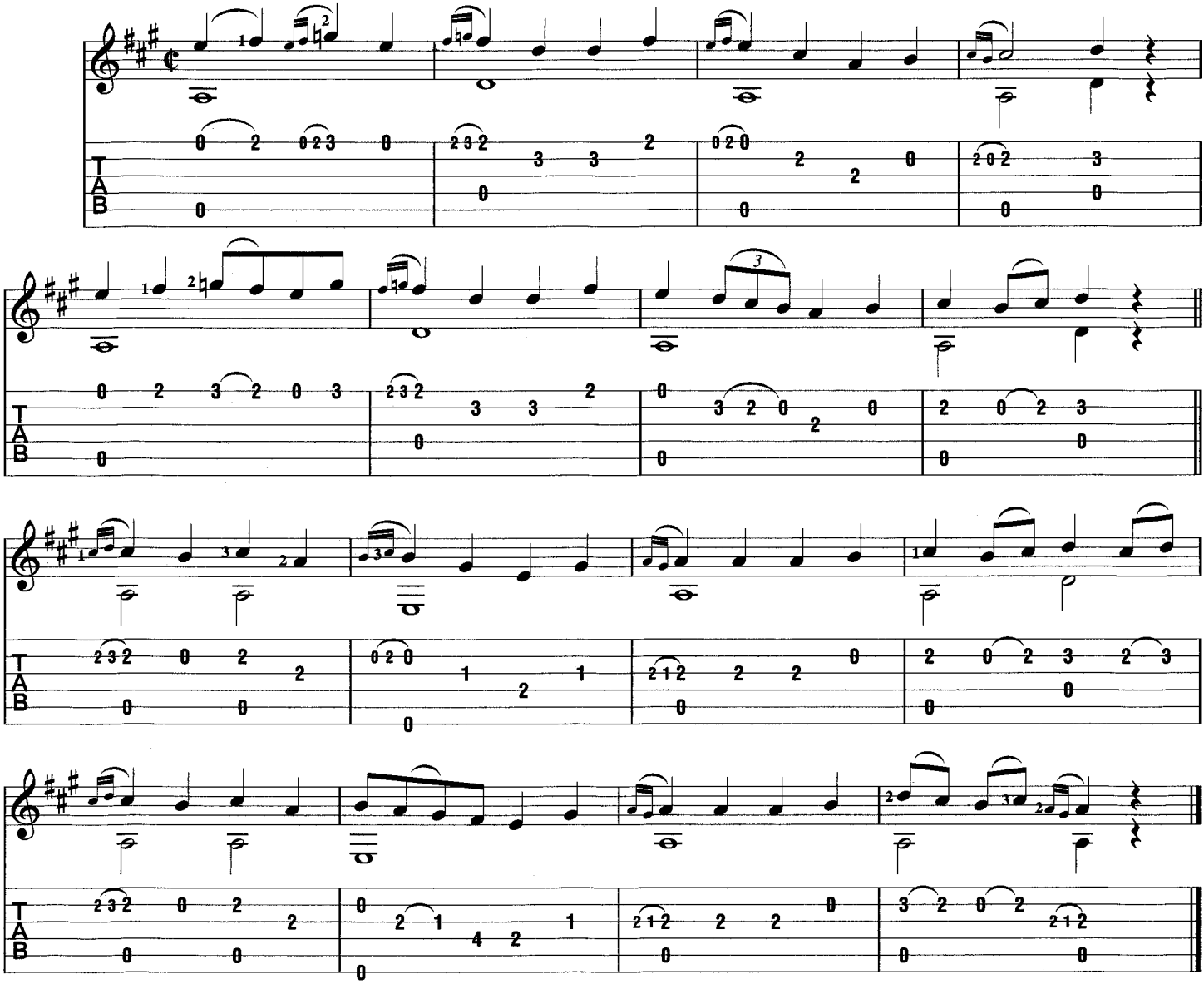


# Peg-A-Ramsey

(with ornamentation)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 85



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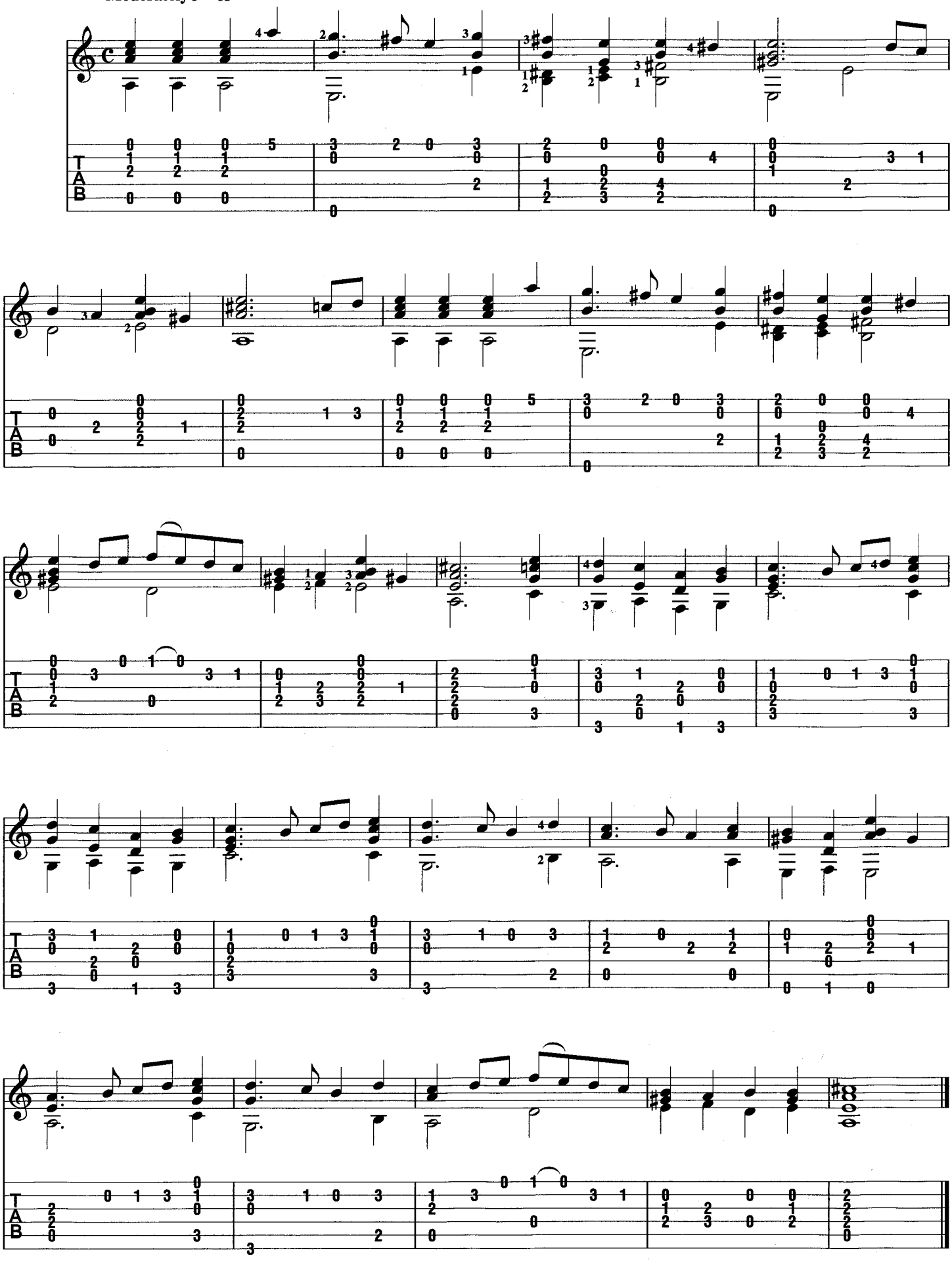
# Pezzo Tedesco

Anon. (Italian, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 63



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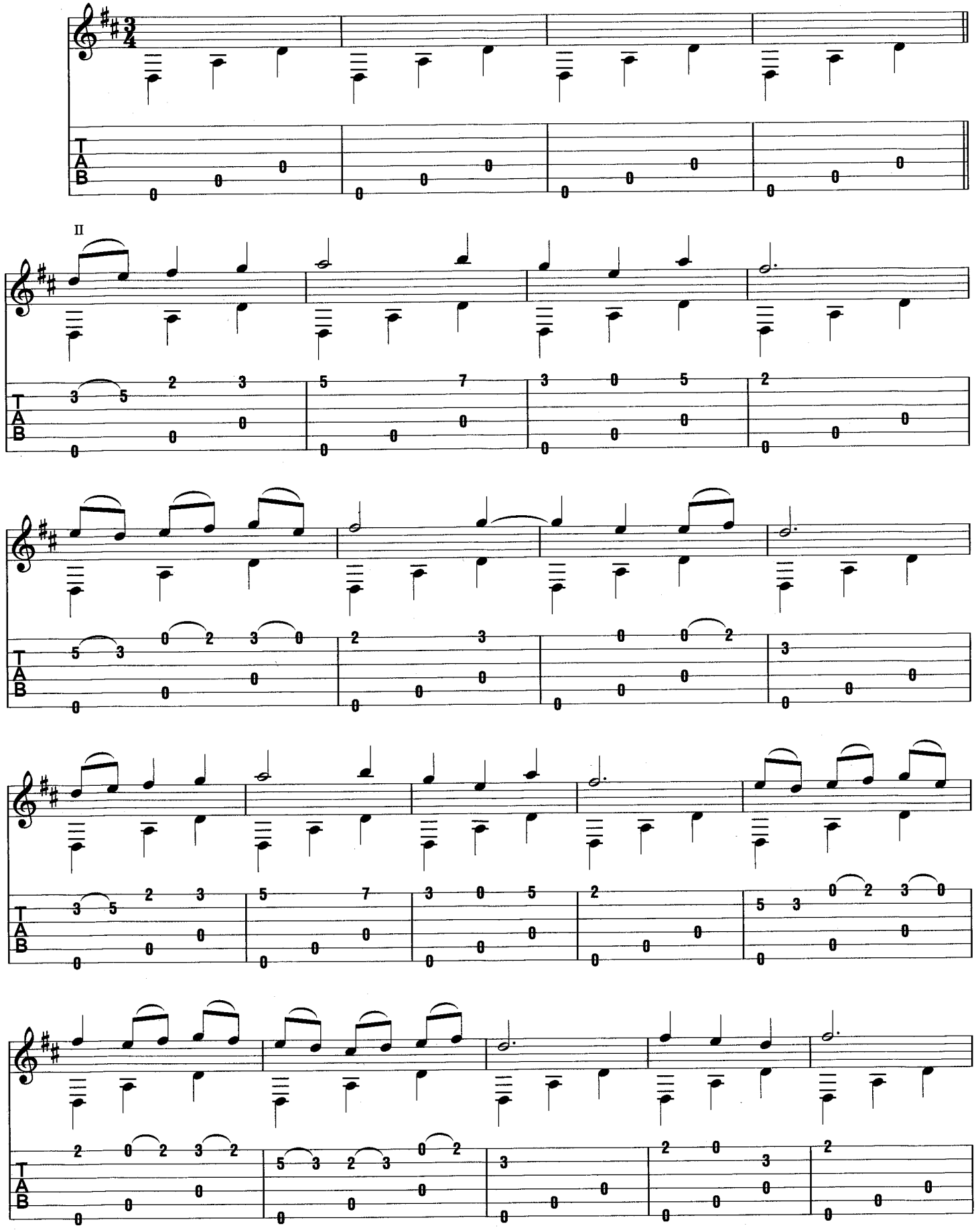
# Saltarello

Anon. (Italian, 16th century)

⑥ = D

**Moderately** ♩ = 63

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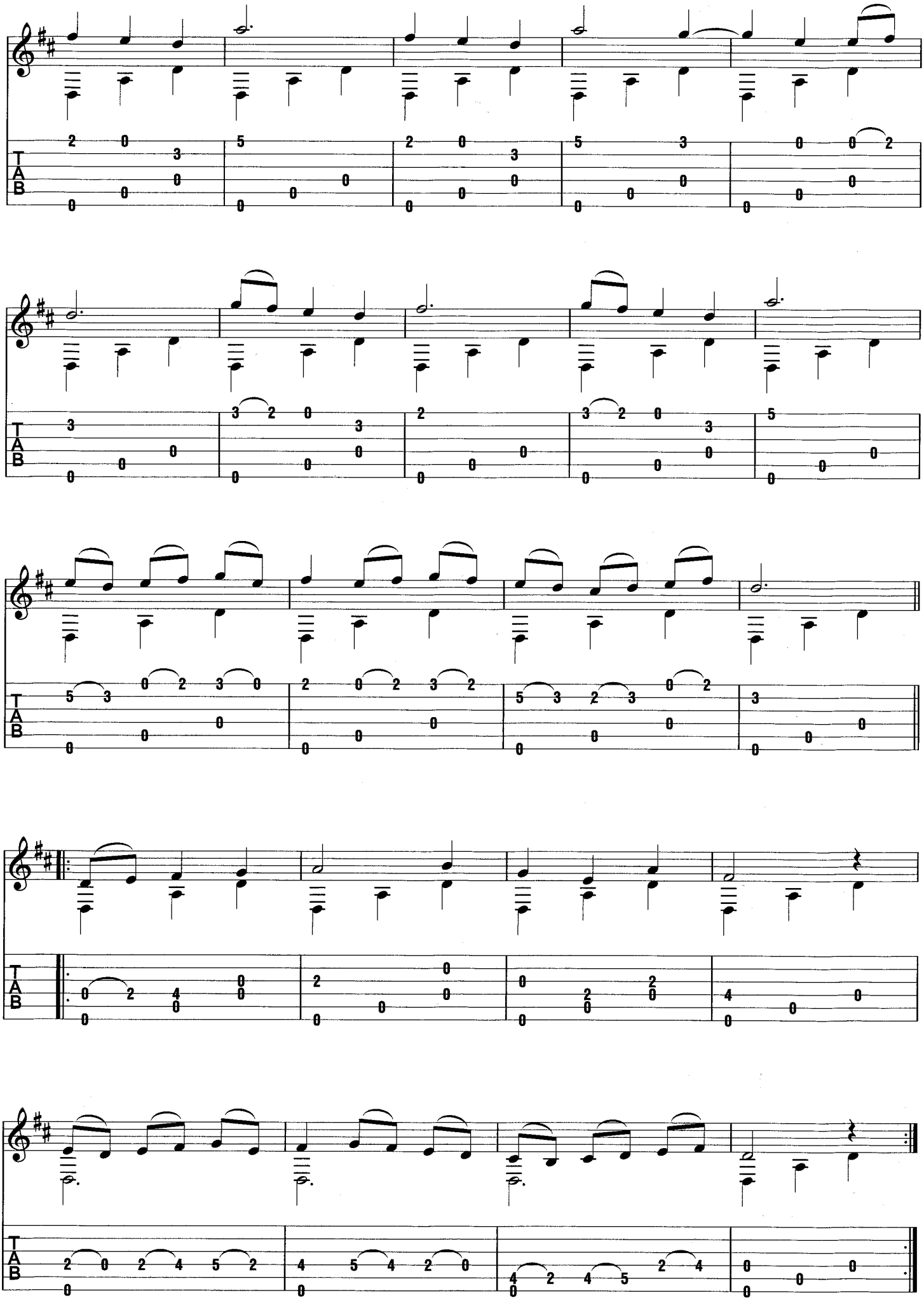
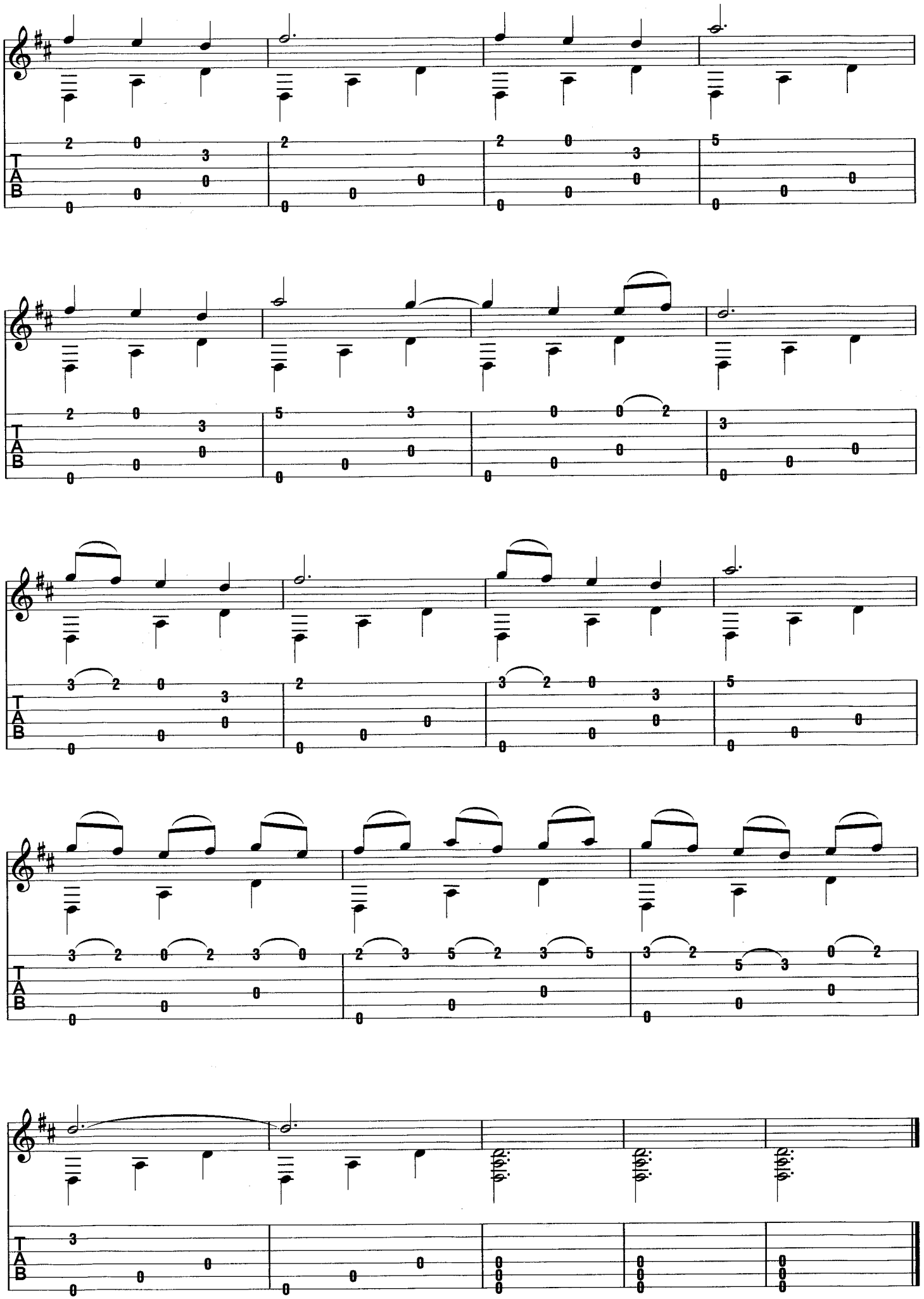
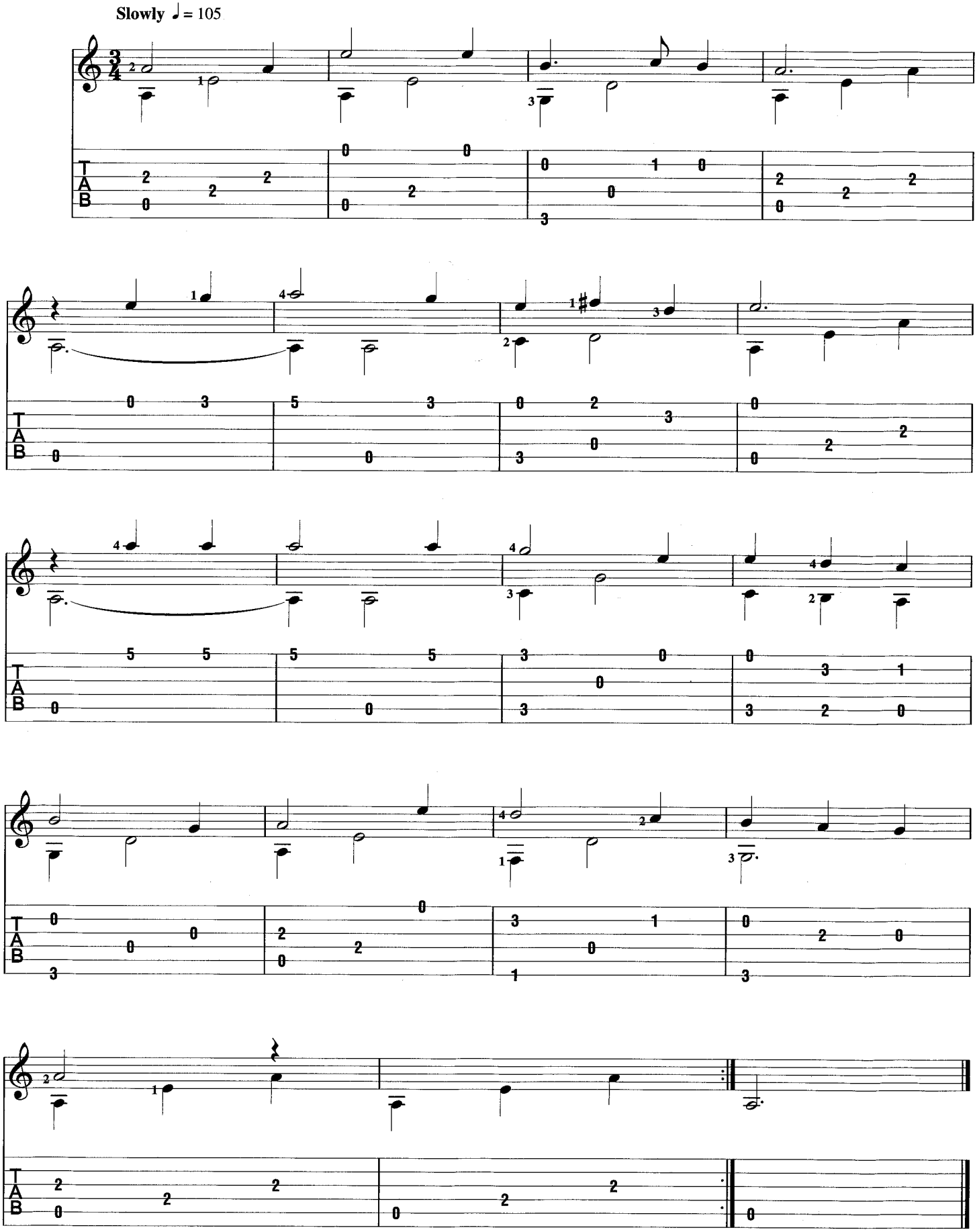




# Scarborough Fair

Anon. (English, 16th century)

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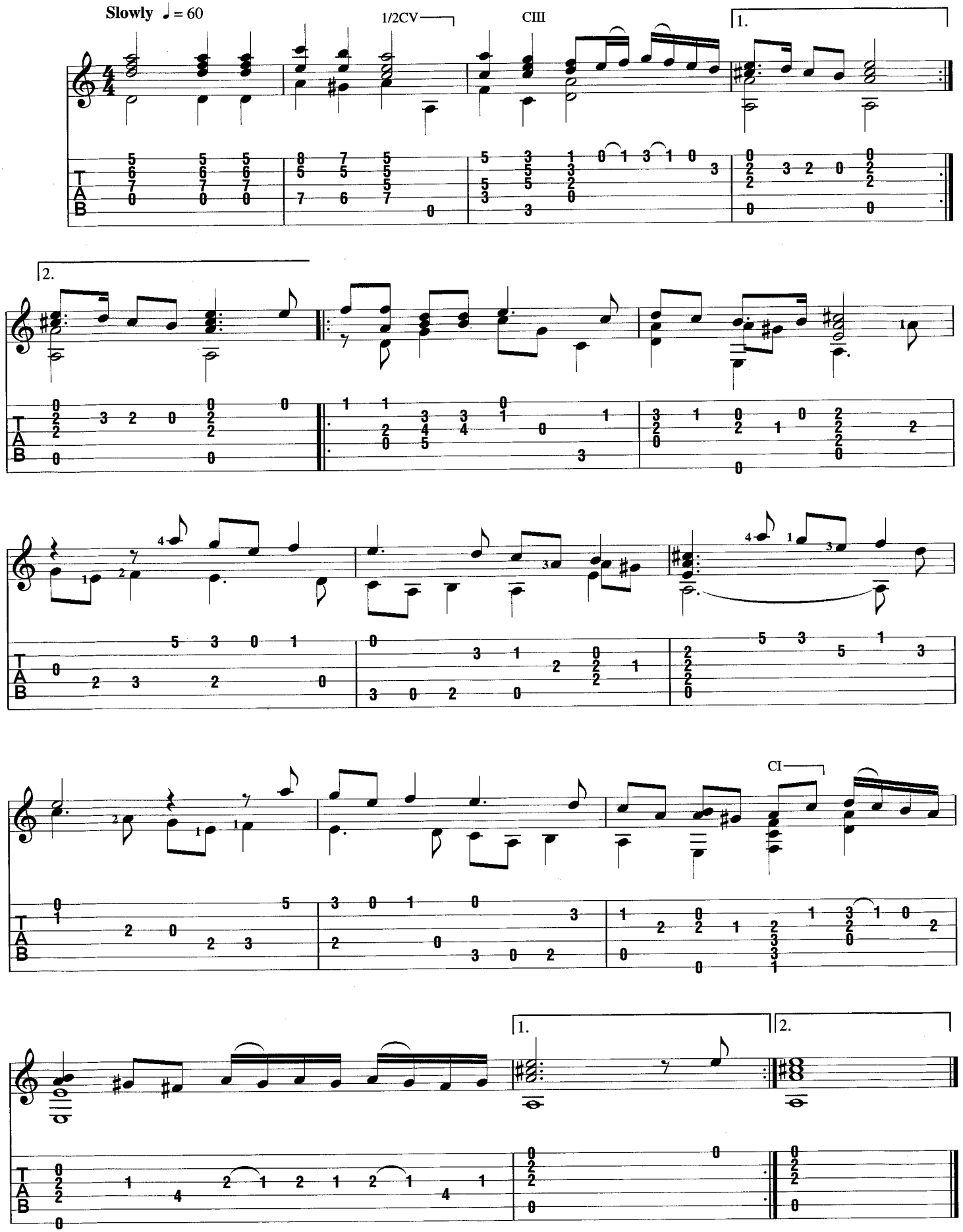
# Se io m'accorgo be mio d'un altro amante

Anon. (Italian, 16th century)

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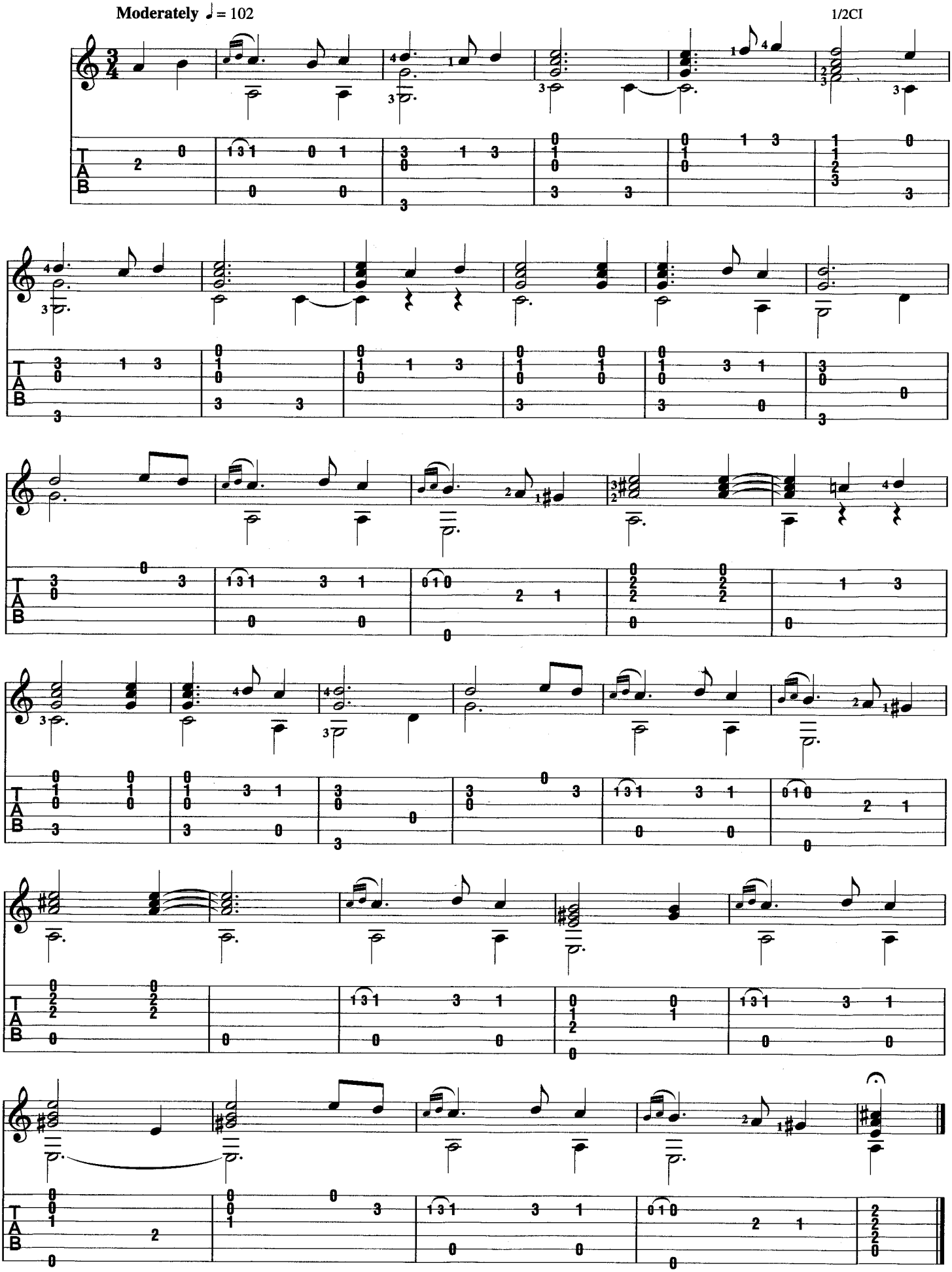
# Spagnoletta

Anon. (Italian, 16th century)

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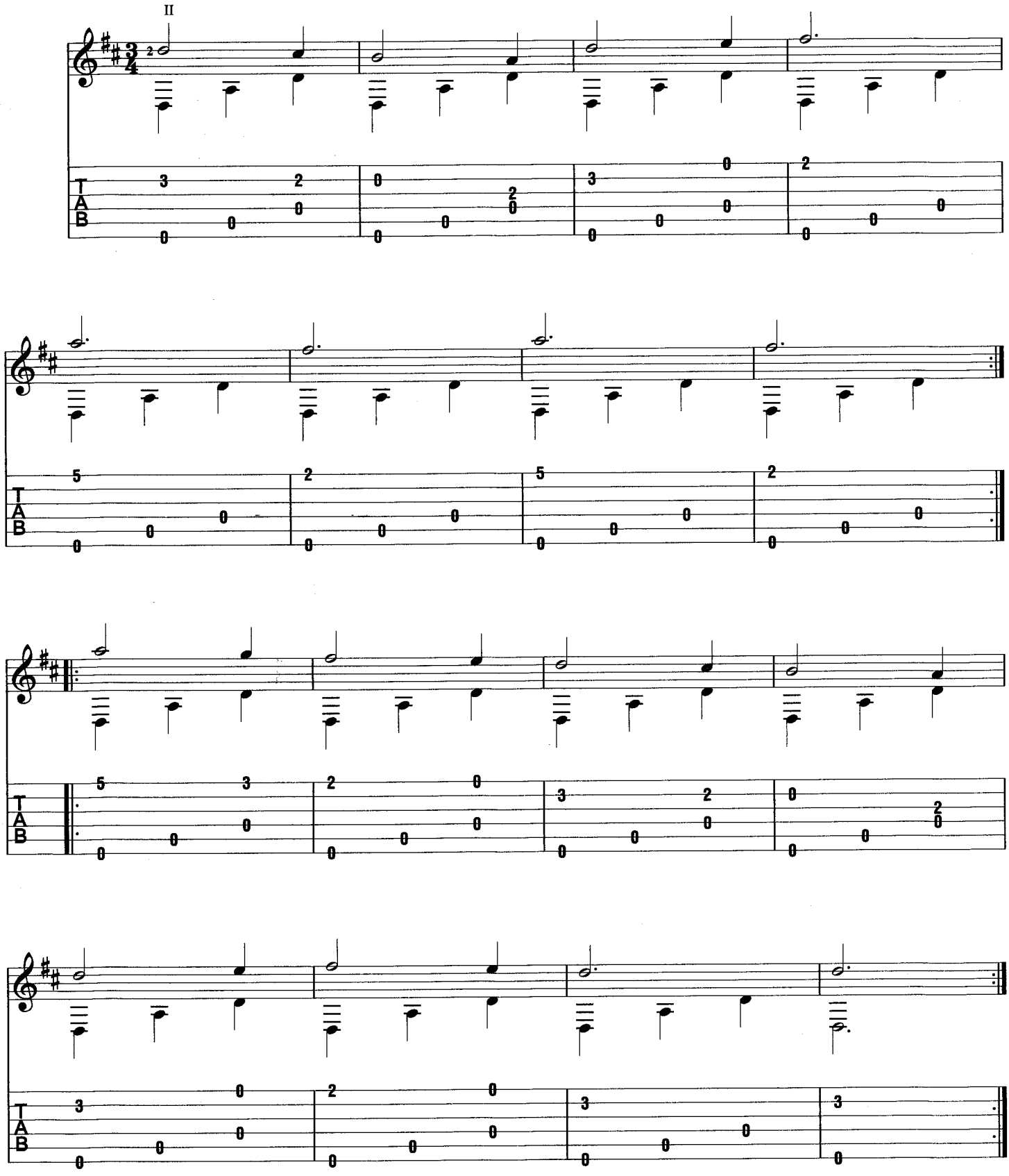
# Tanz

Georg Leopold Fuhrmann (1574–1616)

⑥ = D

**Moderately** ♩. = 66

II



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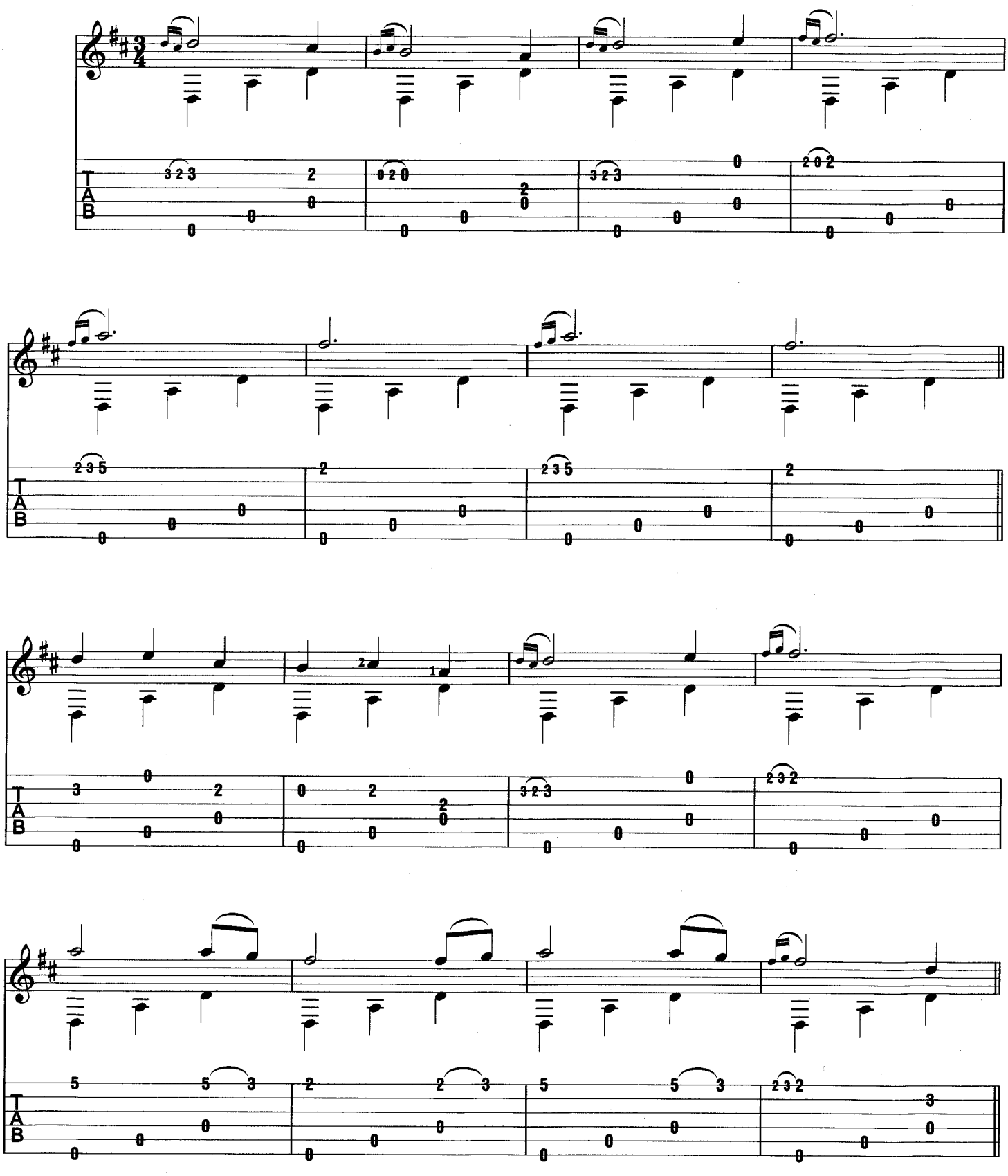
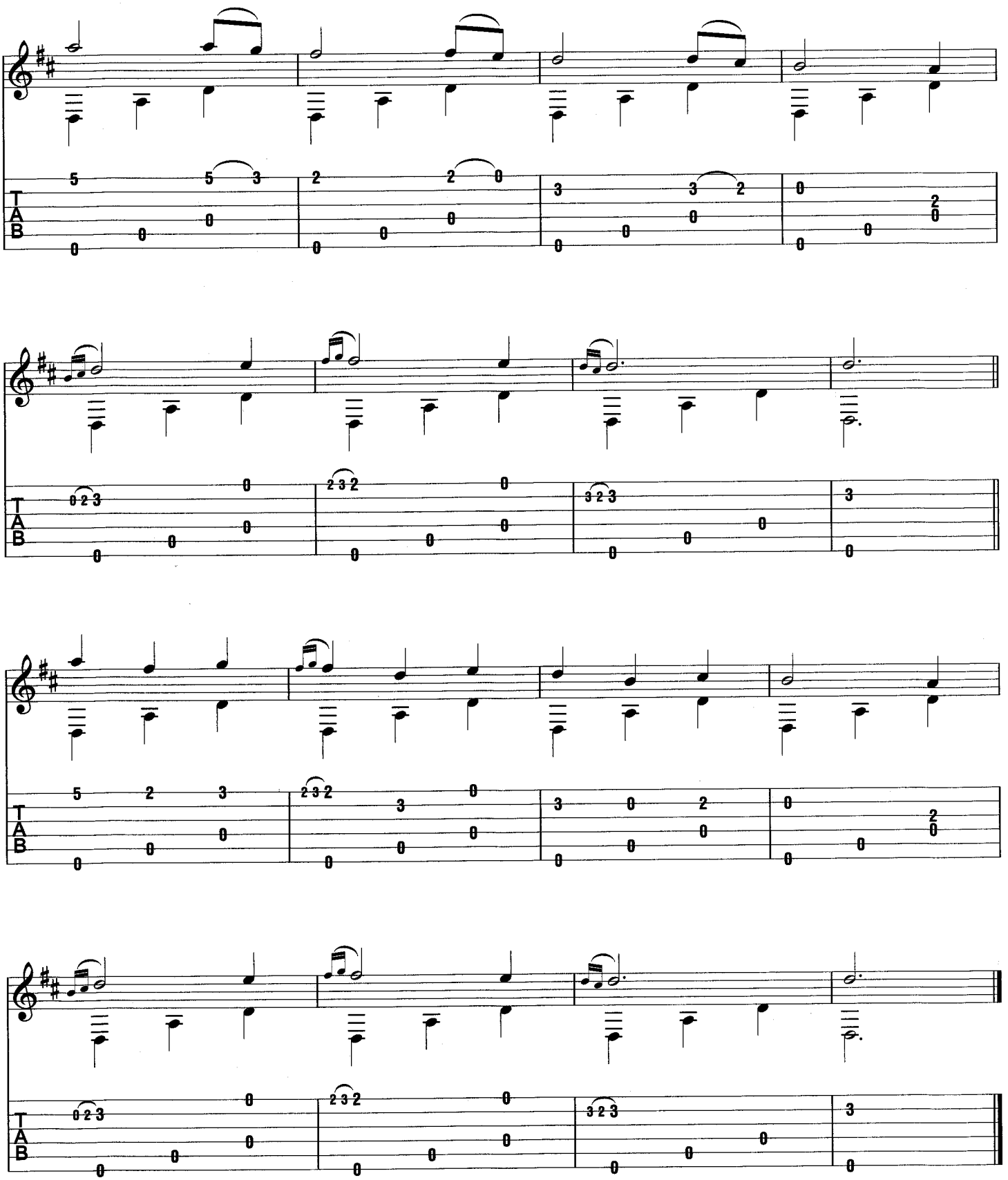
# Tanz

(with ornamentation)

⑥ = D

**Moderately** ♩. = 59



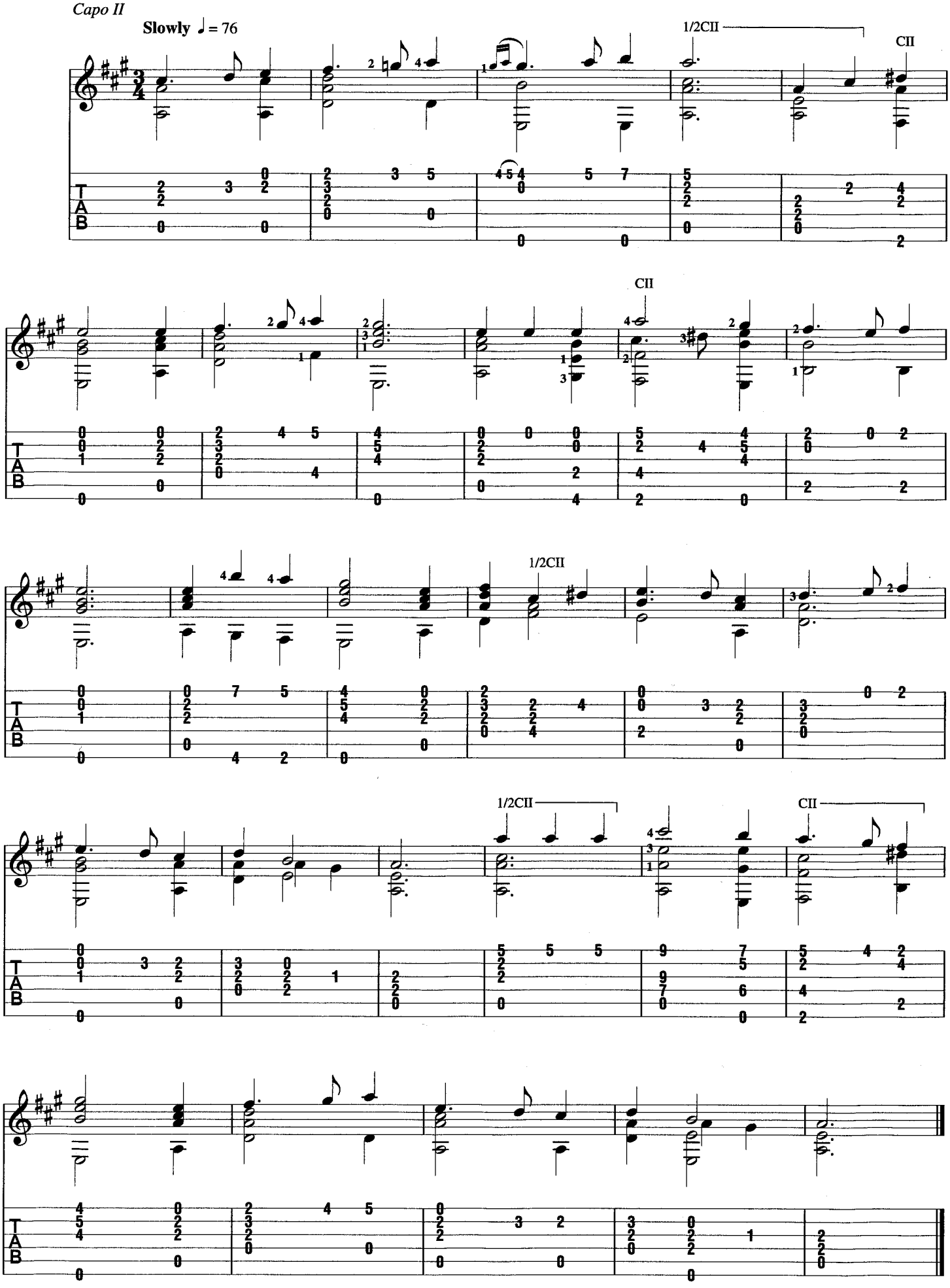


# Tarleton's Resurrection

John Dowland

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 76

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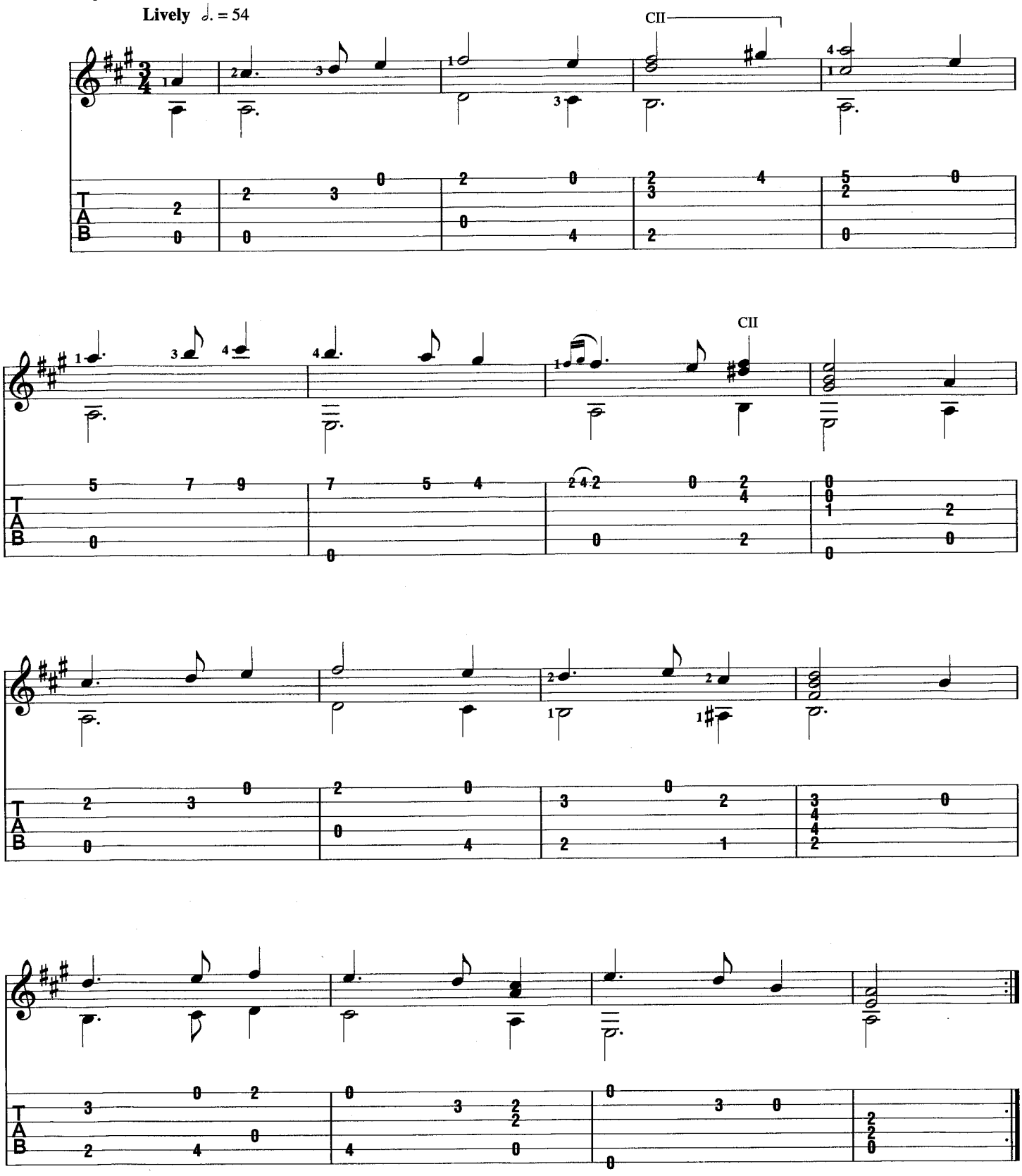
# The Squirrel's Toy

Francis Cutting

*Capo II*

**Lively** ♩. = 54

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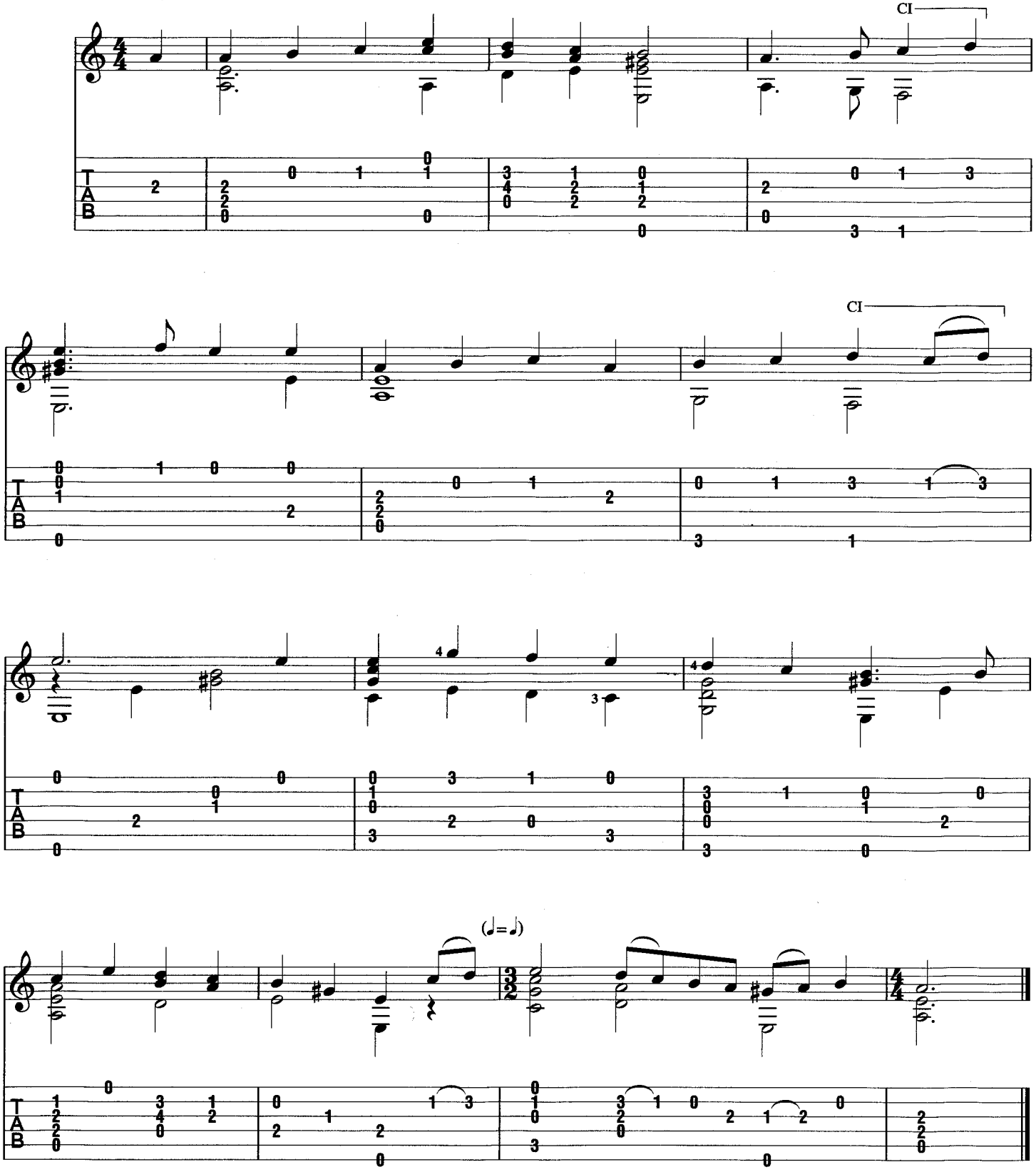
# There Were Three Ravens

Thomas Ravenscroft (c.1582–c.1635)

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 84

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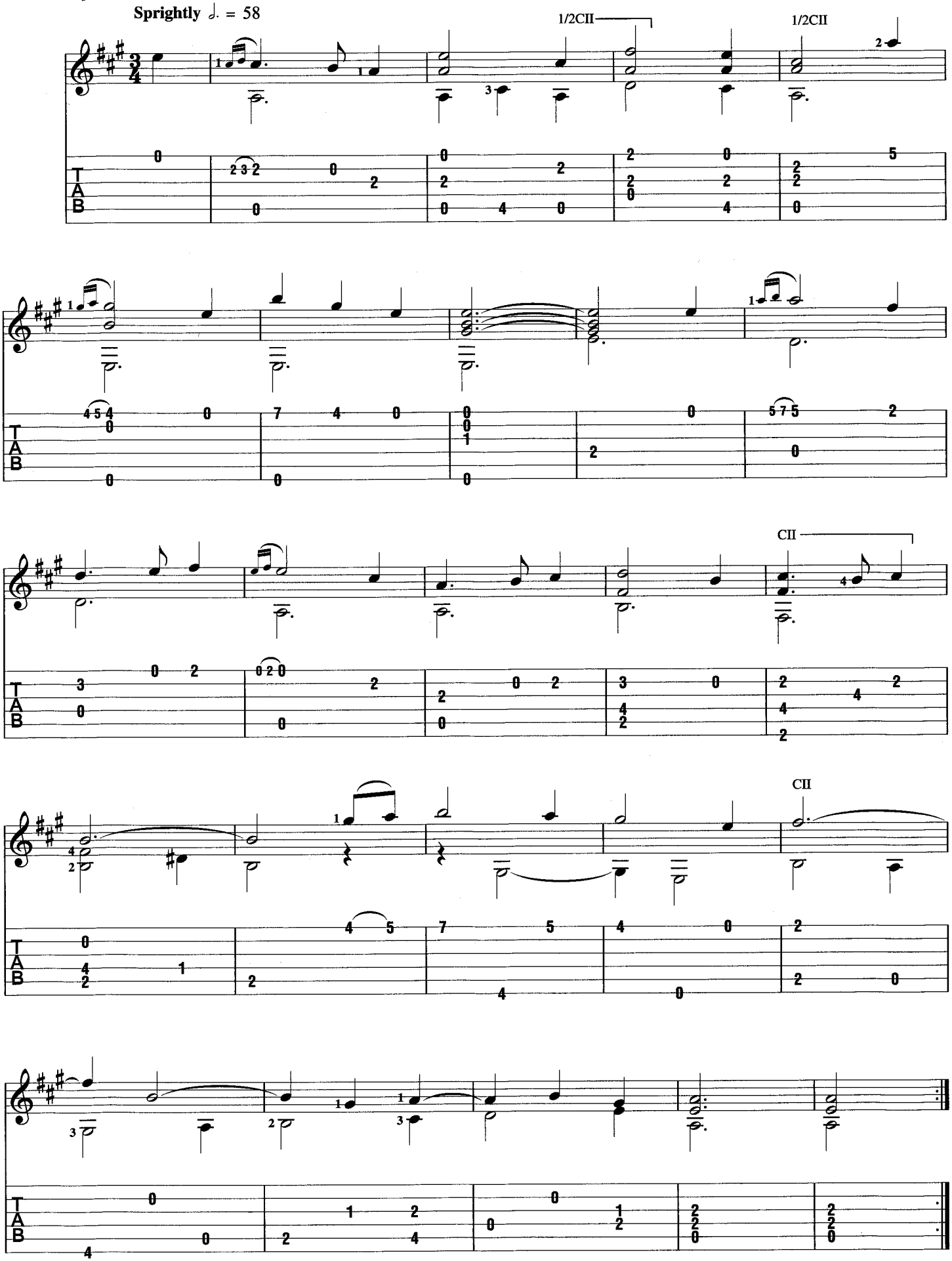
# Toy

Francis Cutting

*Capo II*

**Sprightly** ♩. = 58

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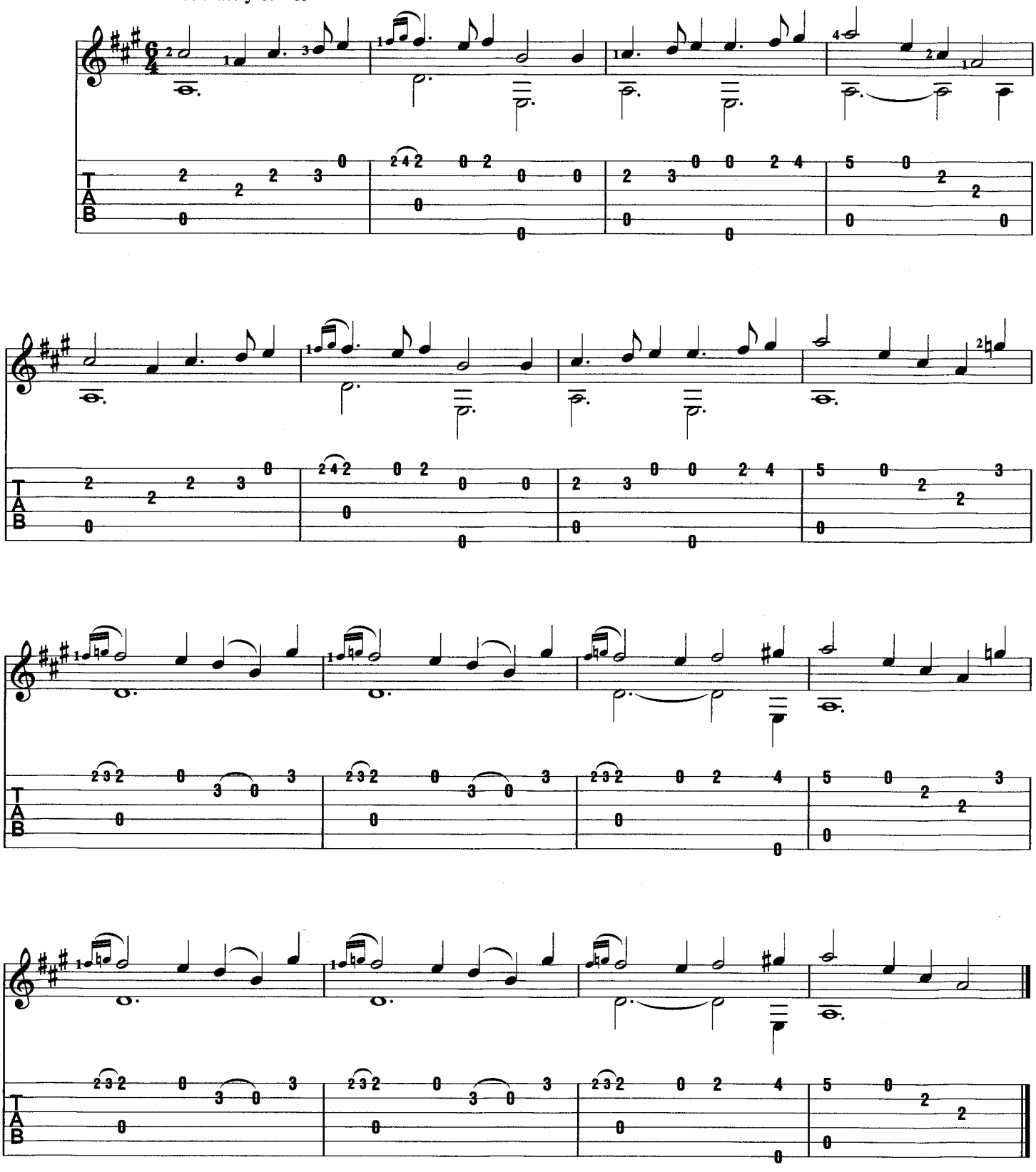
# Toy

(from *Jane Pickering's Lute Book*)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩. = 63



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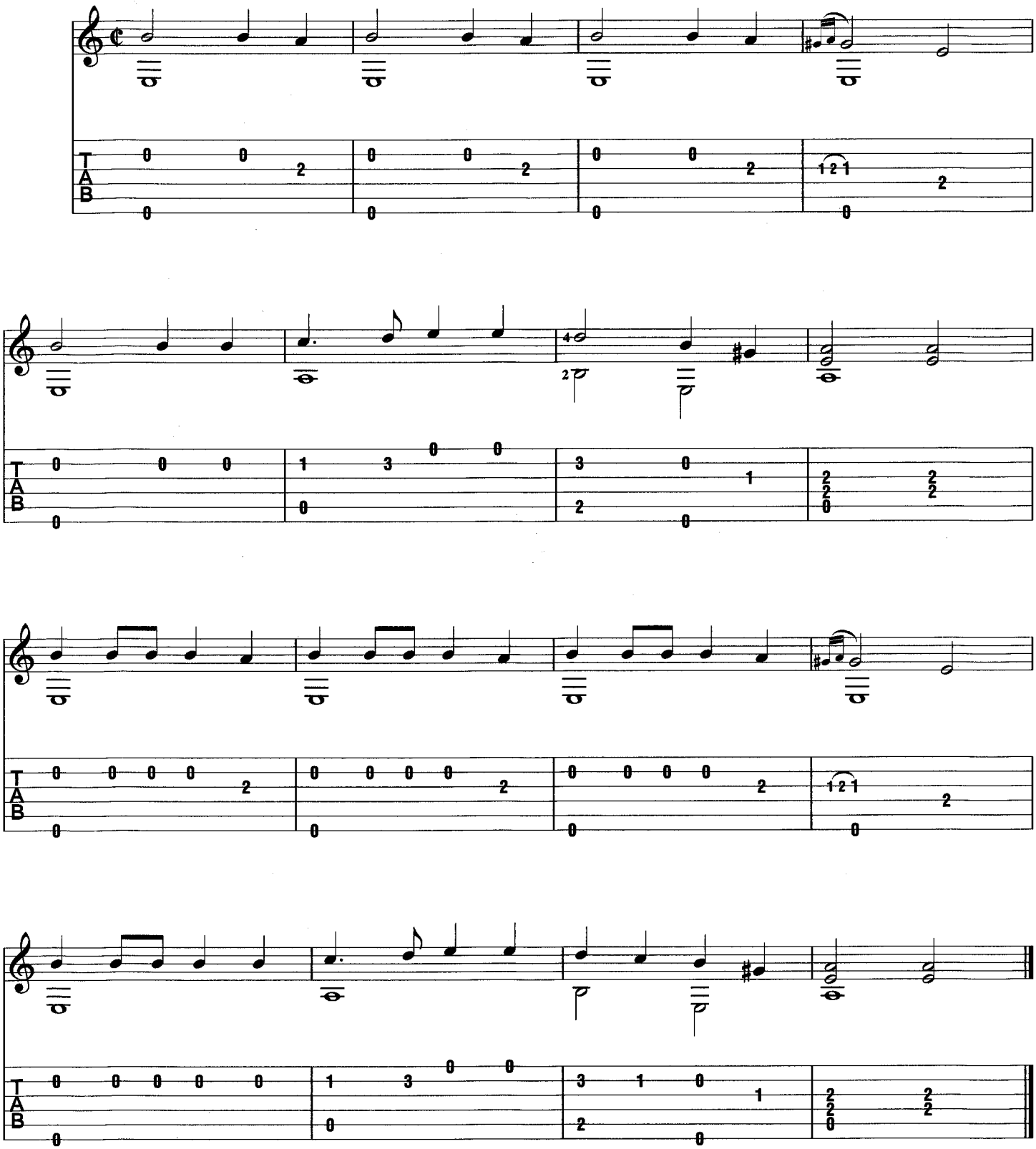
# Toy

(from *Jane Pickering's Lute Book*)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Lively** ♩ = 100



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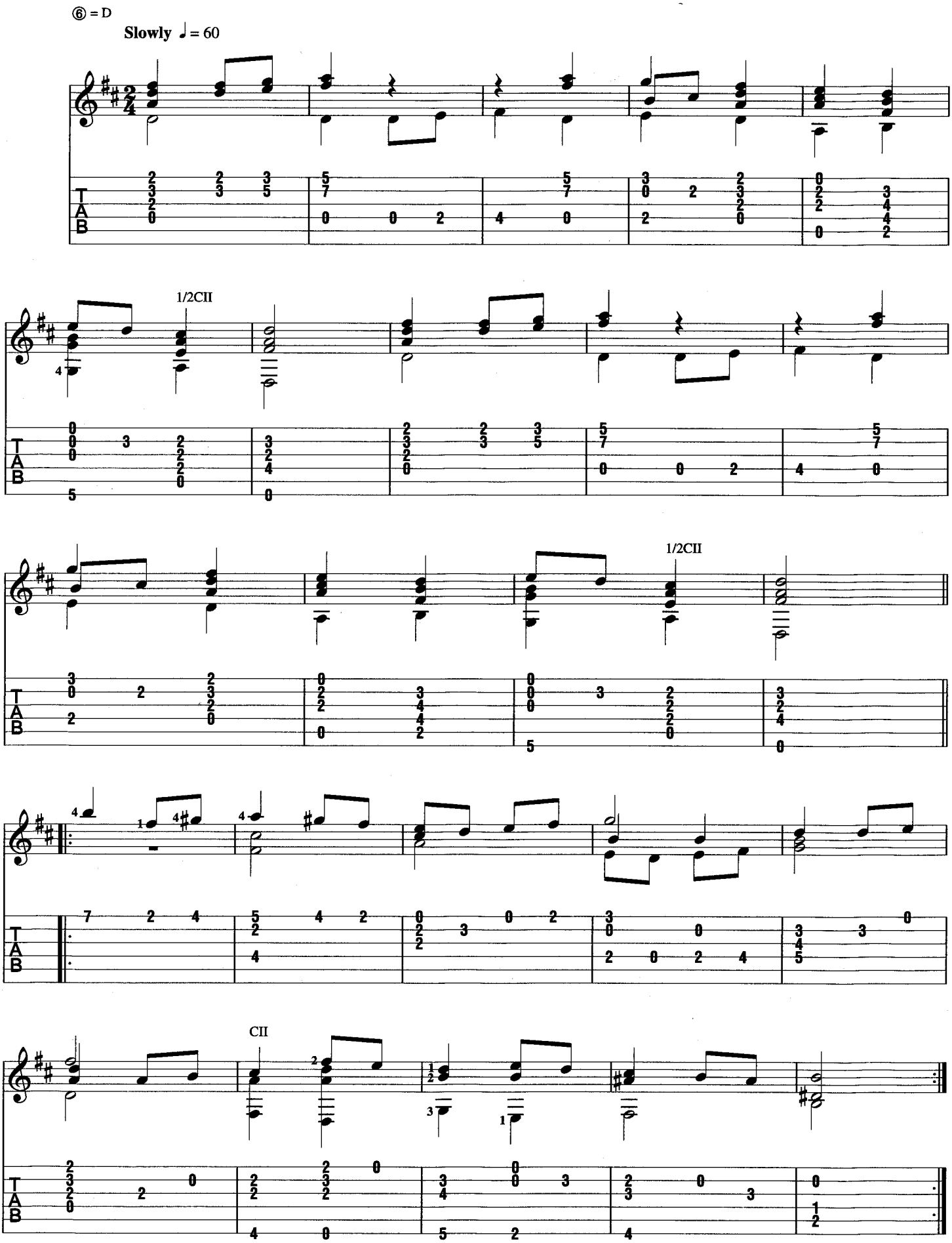
# Vaghe belleze et bionde treccie d'oro vedi che per ti moro

Anon. (Italian, 16th century)

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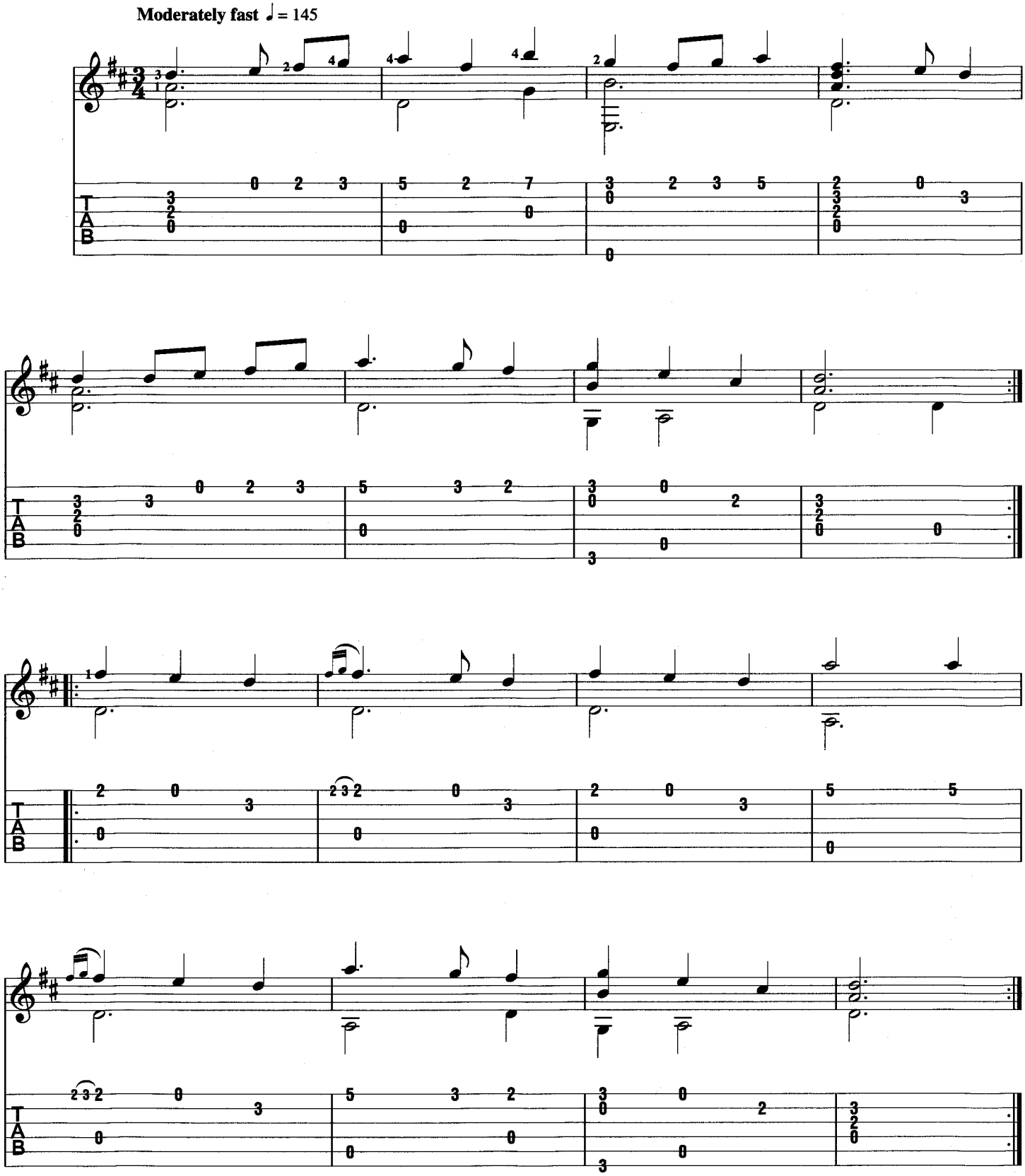
# Volte

Anon. (English, 16th century)

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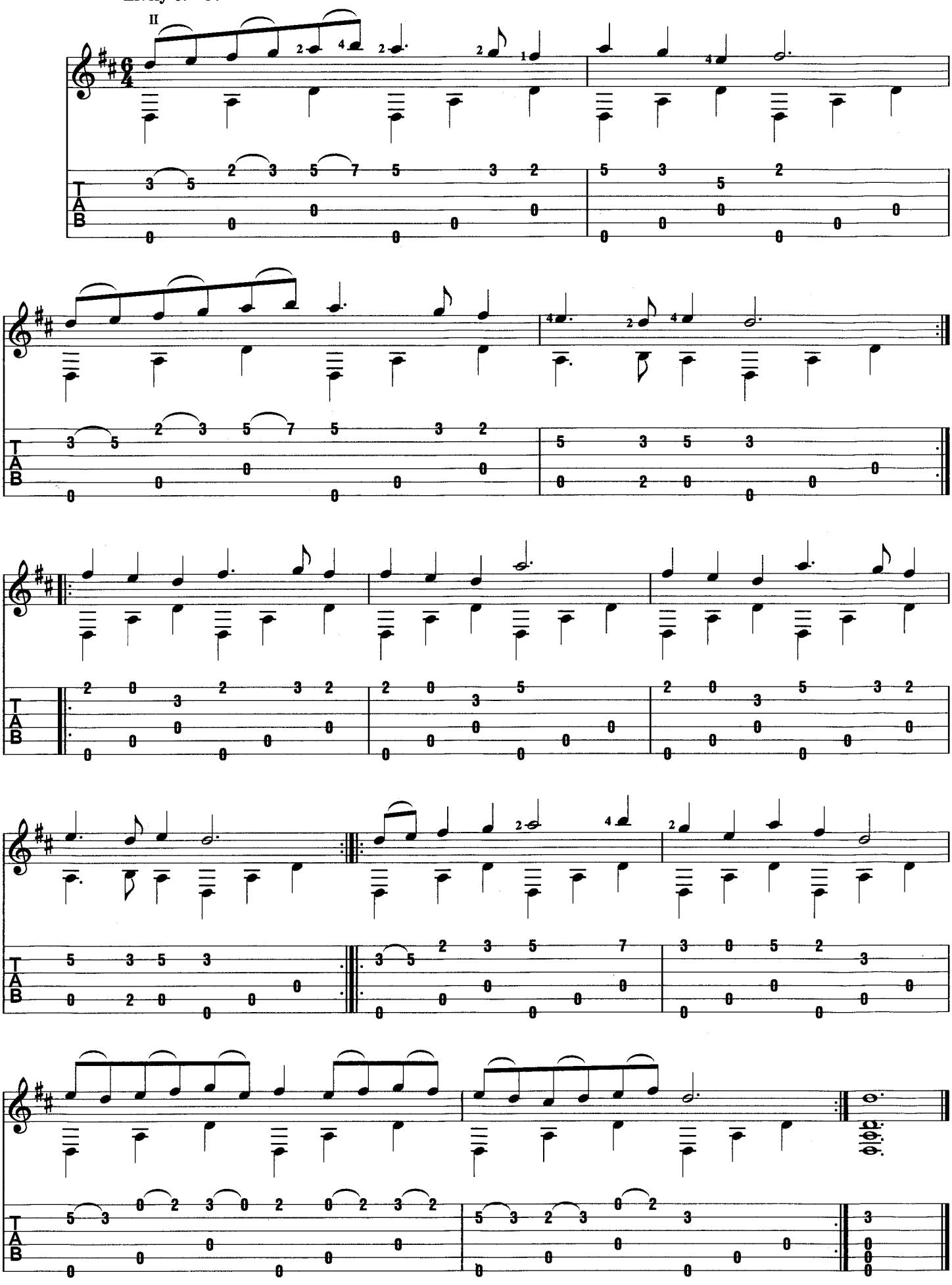
# Volte

⑥ = D

Michael Praetorius (1571–1621)

**Lively** ♩. = 64



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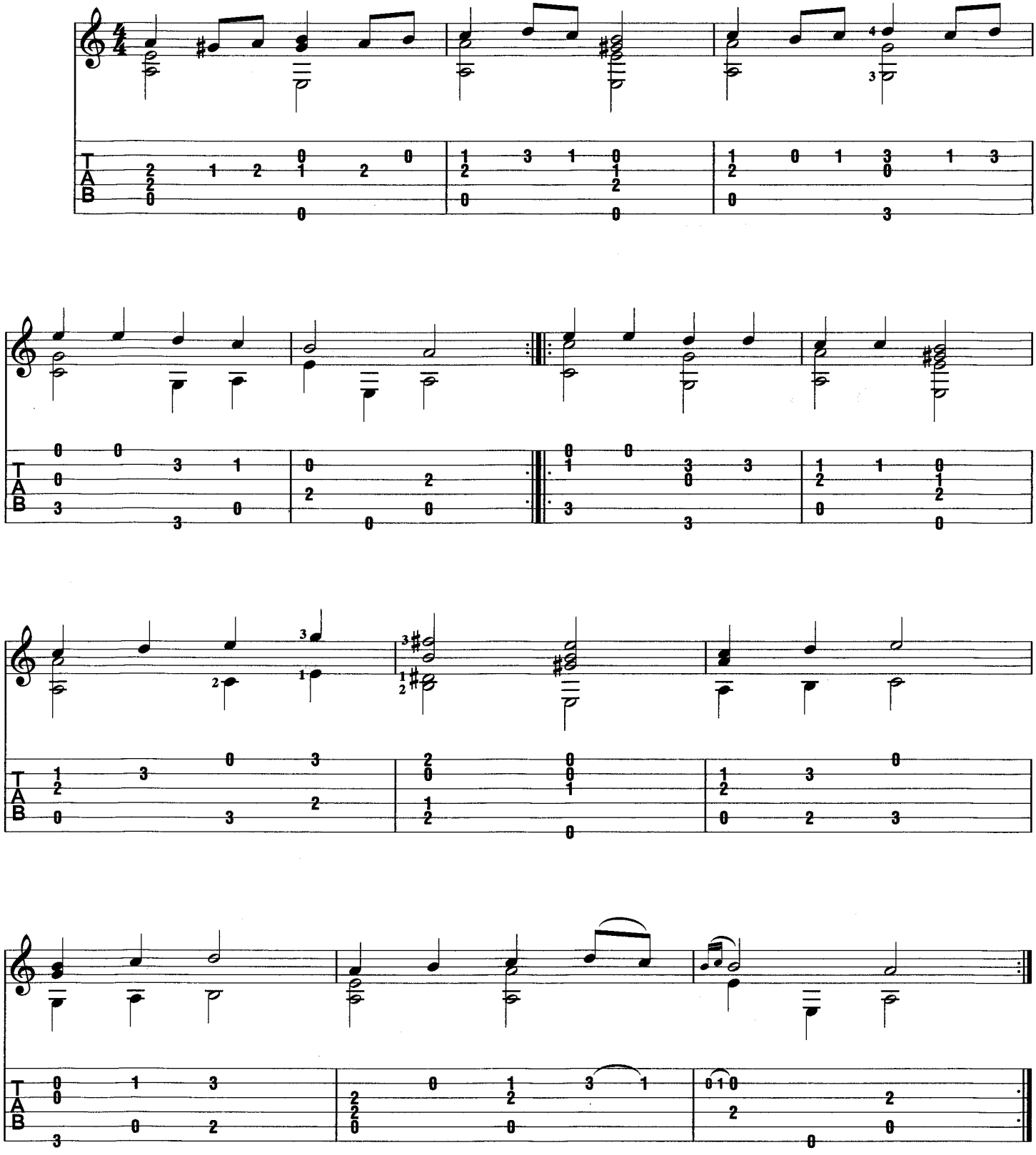
# What If A Day Or A Month Or A Year

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 80



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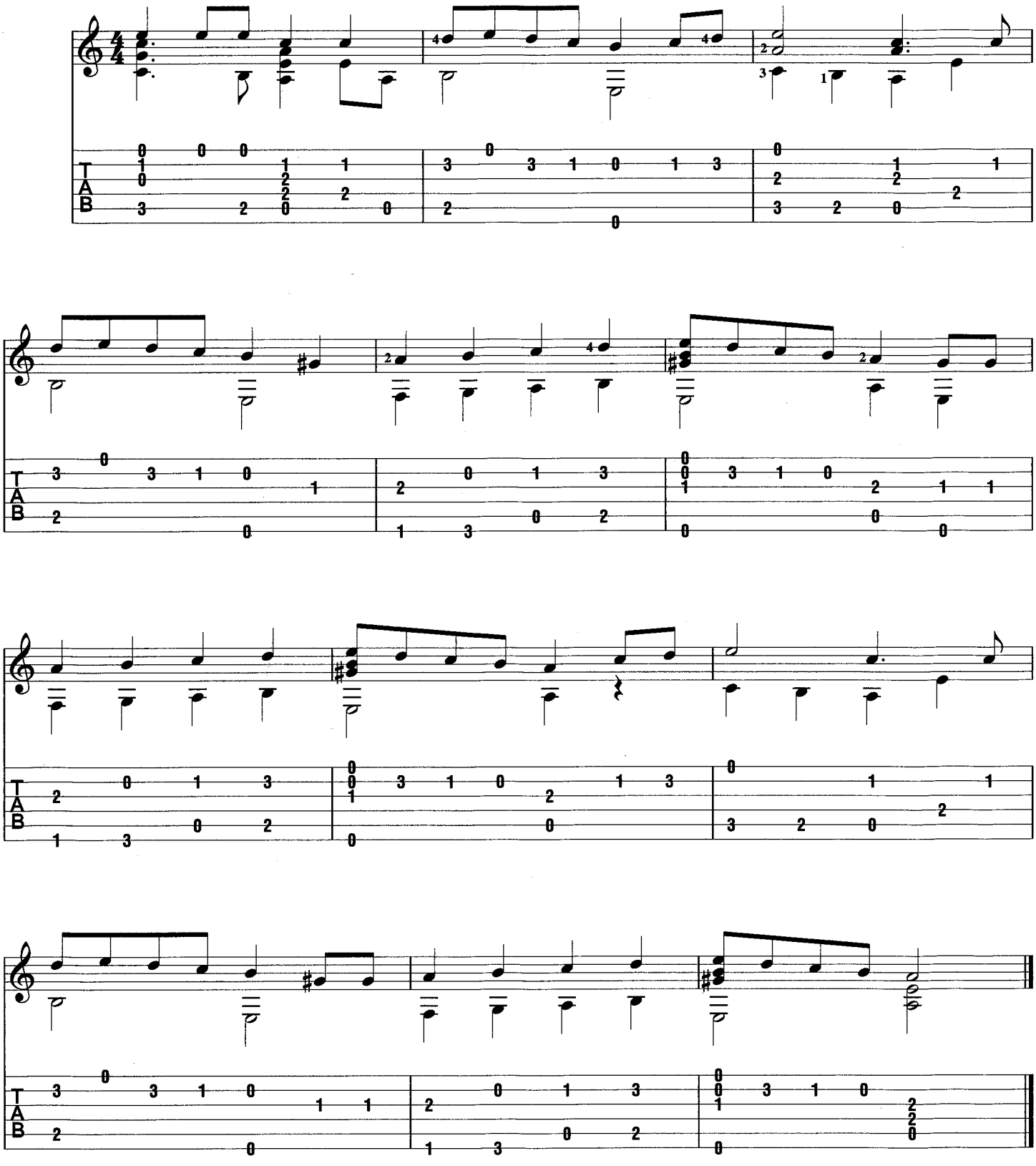
# When That I Was And A Little Tiny Boy

(from *Twelfth Night*)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 90



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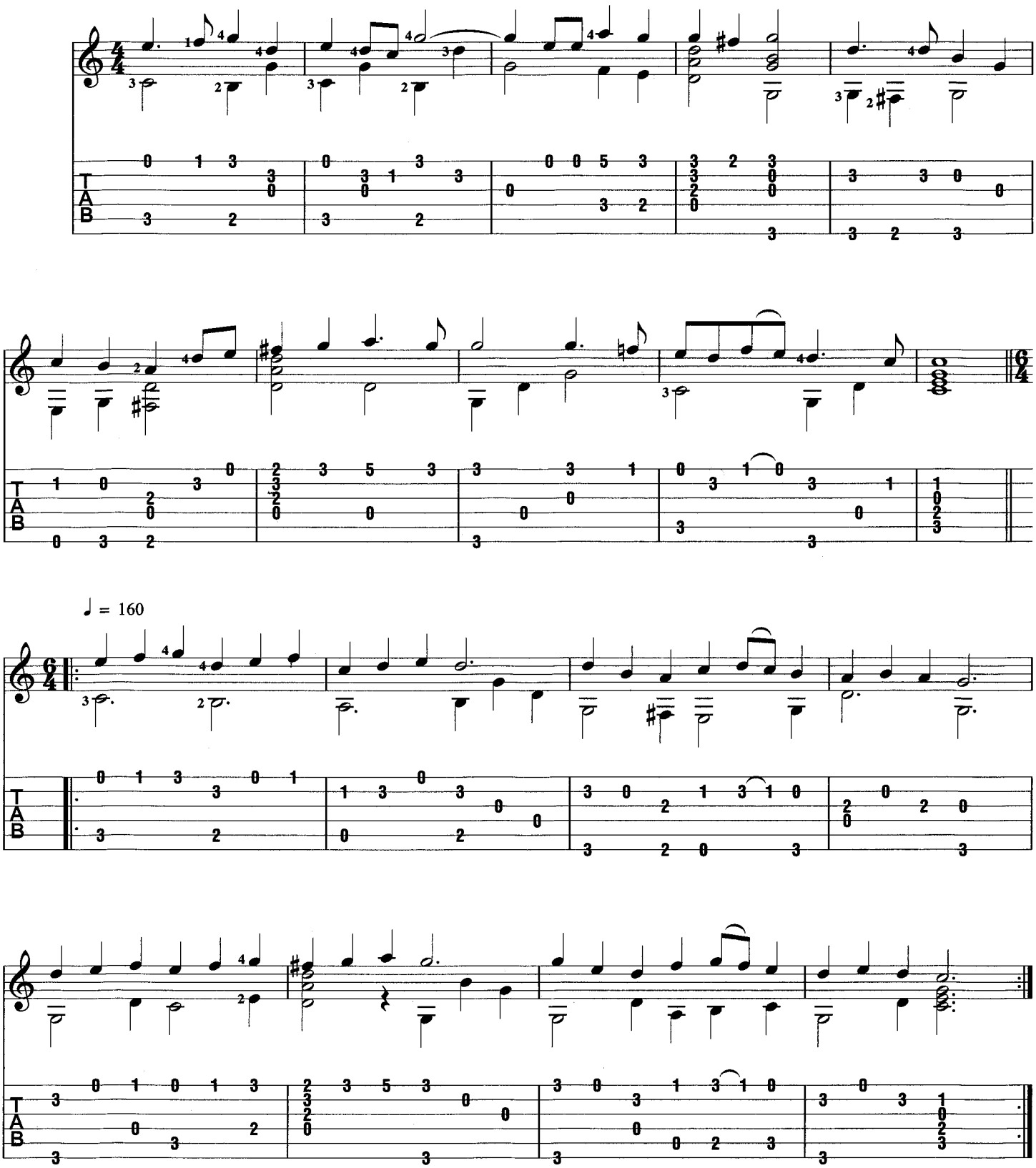
# Where The Bee Sucks

(from *The Tempest*)

Robert Johnson

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩ = 112

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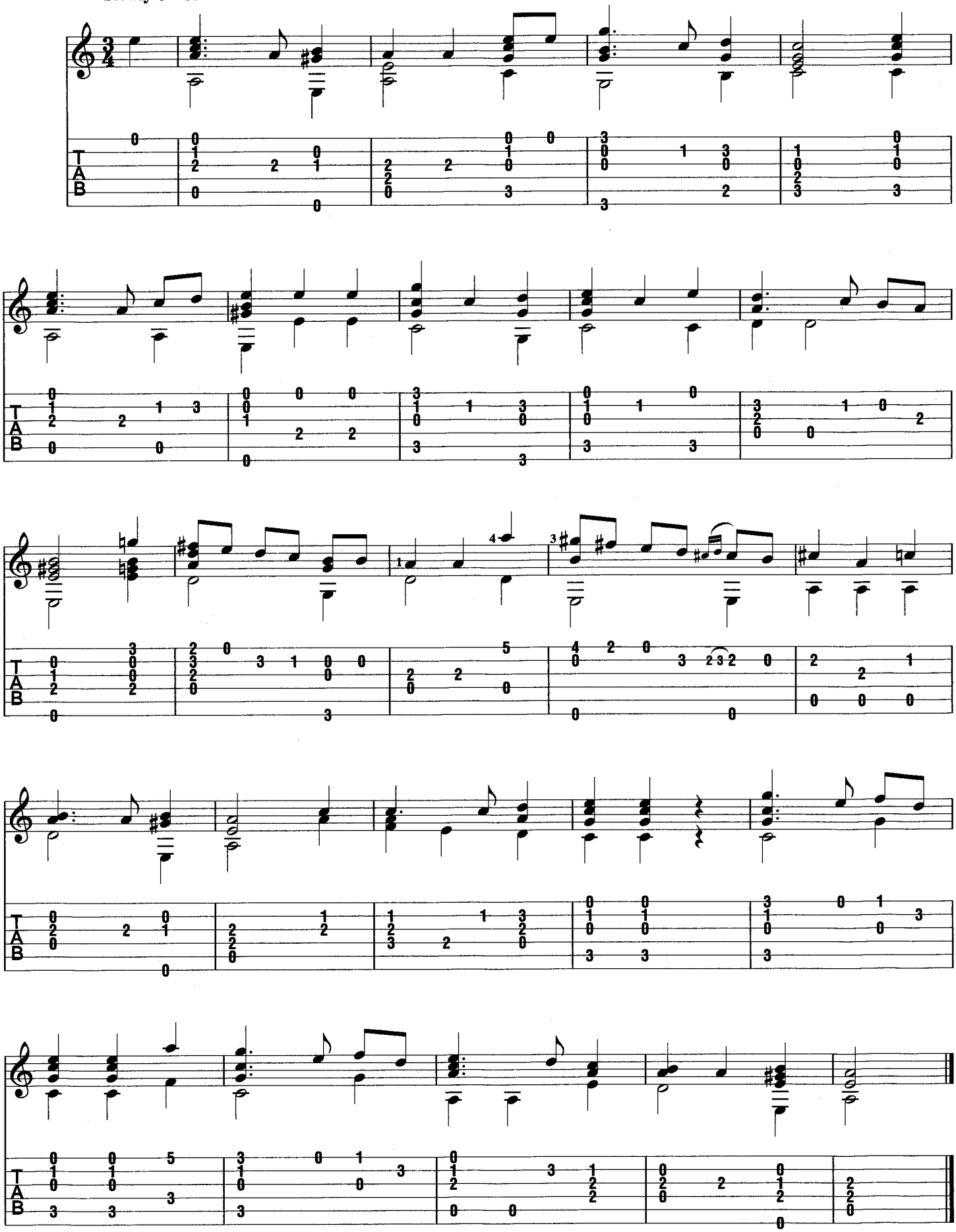
# Willow, Willow

(from *Othello*)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Slowly** ♩ = 66



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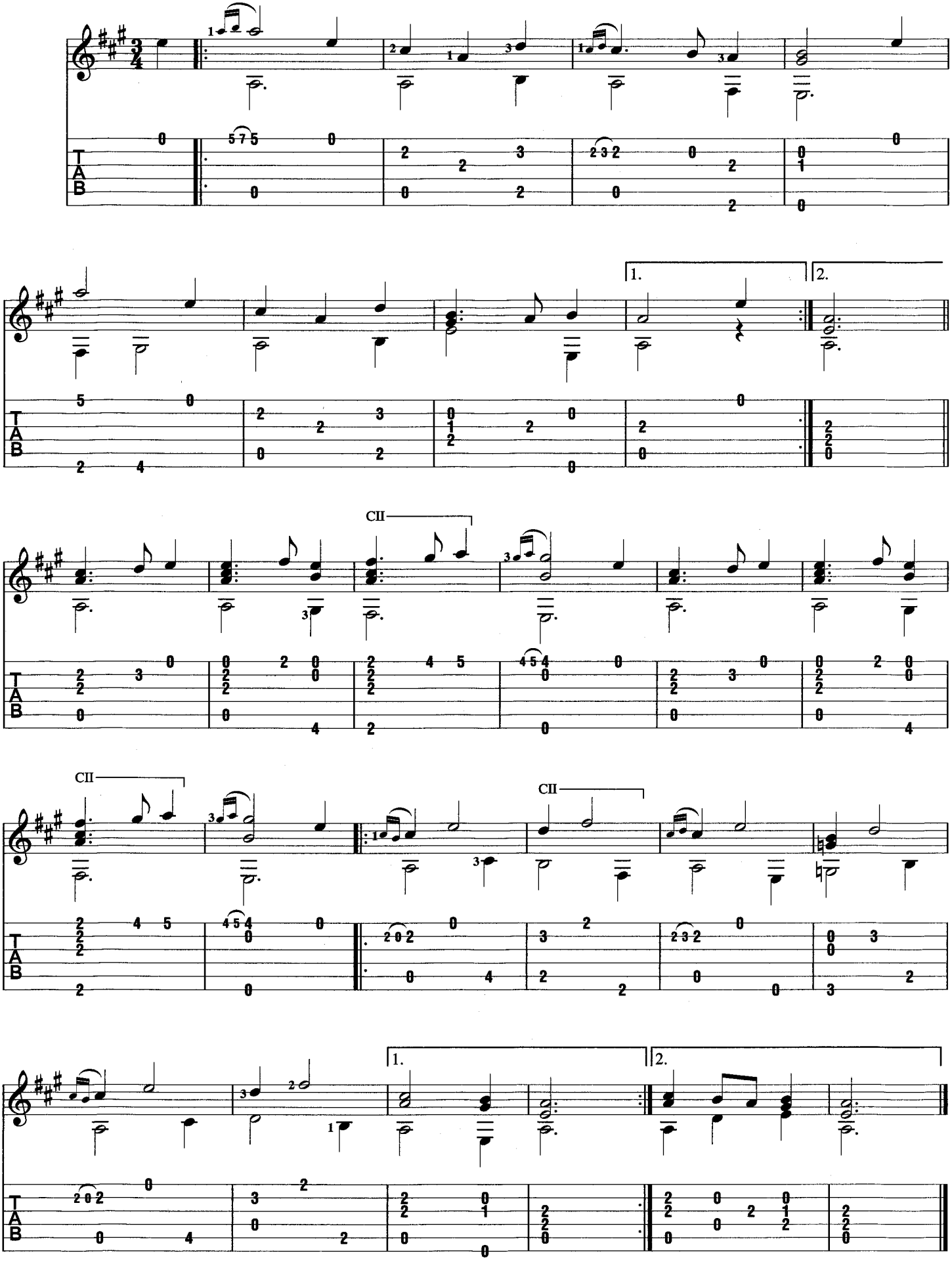
# Wilson's Wilde

*Capo II*

Anon. (English, 16th century)

**Moderately** ♩. = 55

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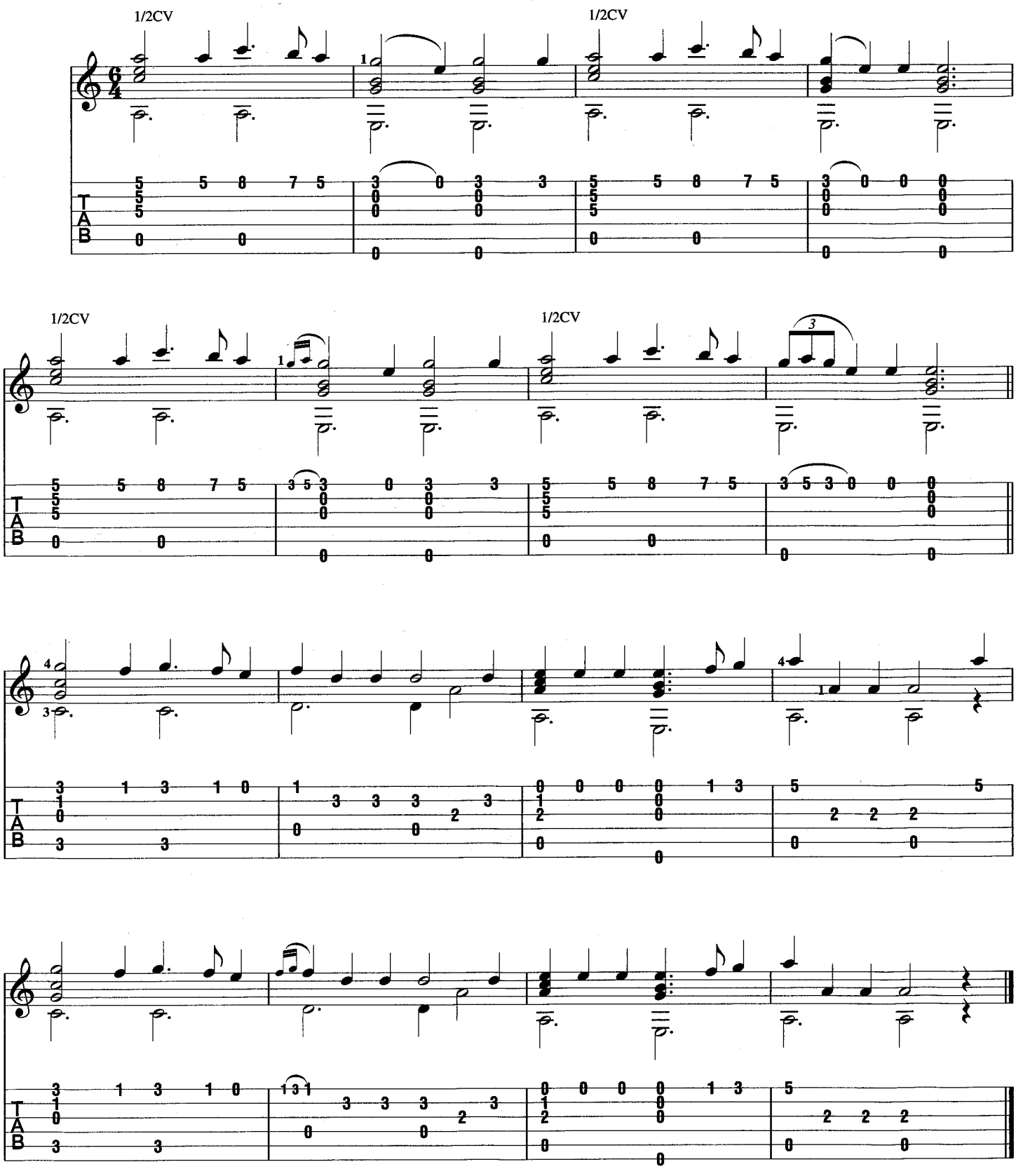
# Woodycock

(from *The English Dancing Master*, 1651)

Anon. (English, 16th century)

*Capo II*

**Moderately** ♩. = 55

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The Renaissance was a time of astonishing innovation and imagination in the musical arts. *Easy Renaissance Pieces for Classical Guitar* brings to life some of the best-known lute works of the Renaissance, including many musical selections from the plays of William Shakespeare, such as "Greensleeves," "Where The Bee Sucks," and "When That I Was And A Little Tiny Boy." Many of the great lute composers are represented here, including Dowland, Johnson, and even King Henry VIII. *Easy Renaissance Pieces for Classical Guitar* is designed for the beginner and intermediate guitarist and includes 61 pieces with an accompanying audio CD performed by Jerry Willard.

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Almain *Robert Johnson*
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Bianco Fiore *Cesare Negri*
Black Nag (from *The Dancing Master*)
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Bonny Sweet Robin
Branle
Branle de la Cornemuse *Robert Ballard*
Branle de Village *Robert Ballard*
Coventry Carol
Dove son quei fieri occhi?
Fantasia
Fortune My Foe *John Dowland*
Galliard
Go From My Window
Greensleeves
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Kemp's Jig
Les Bouffons *Jean d' Estrées*
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Tanz *Georg Leopold Fuhrmann*
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Toy *Francis Cutting*
Toy (from *Jane Pickering's Lute Book*)
Toy (from *Jane Pickering's Lute Book*)
Vaghe belleze et bionde treccie d'oro vedi che per ti moro
Volte
Volte *Michael Praetorius*
What If A Day Or A Month Or A Year
When That I Was And A Little Tiny Boy (from *Twelfth Night*)
Where The Bee Sucks (from *The Tempest*) *Robert Johnson*
Willow, Willow (from *Othello*)
Wilson's Wilde
Woodycock (from *The English Dancing Master*)

**Jerry Willard** is an accomplished player of all types of fretted instruments, including archlute, Renaissance lute, Baroque guitar, 19th-century guitar, and modern guitar, and is well known as an ensemble player. Some of Mr. Willard's many publications for guitar include *The Complete Lute Music of J.S. Bach* and *The Complete Works of Gaspar Sanz* (both published by Amsco Publications). Mr. Willard resides in New York City and is on the faculty of the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

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